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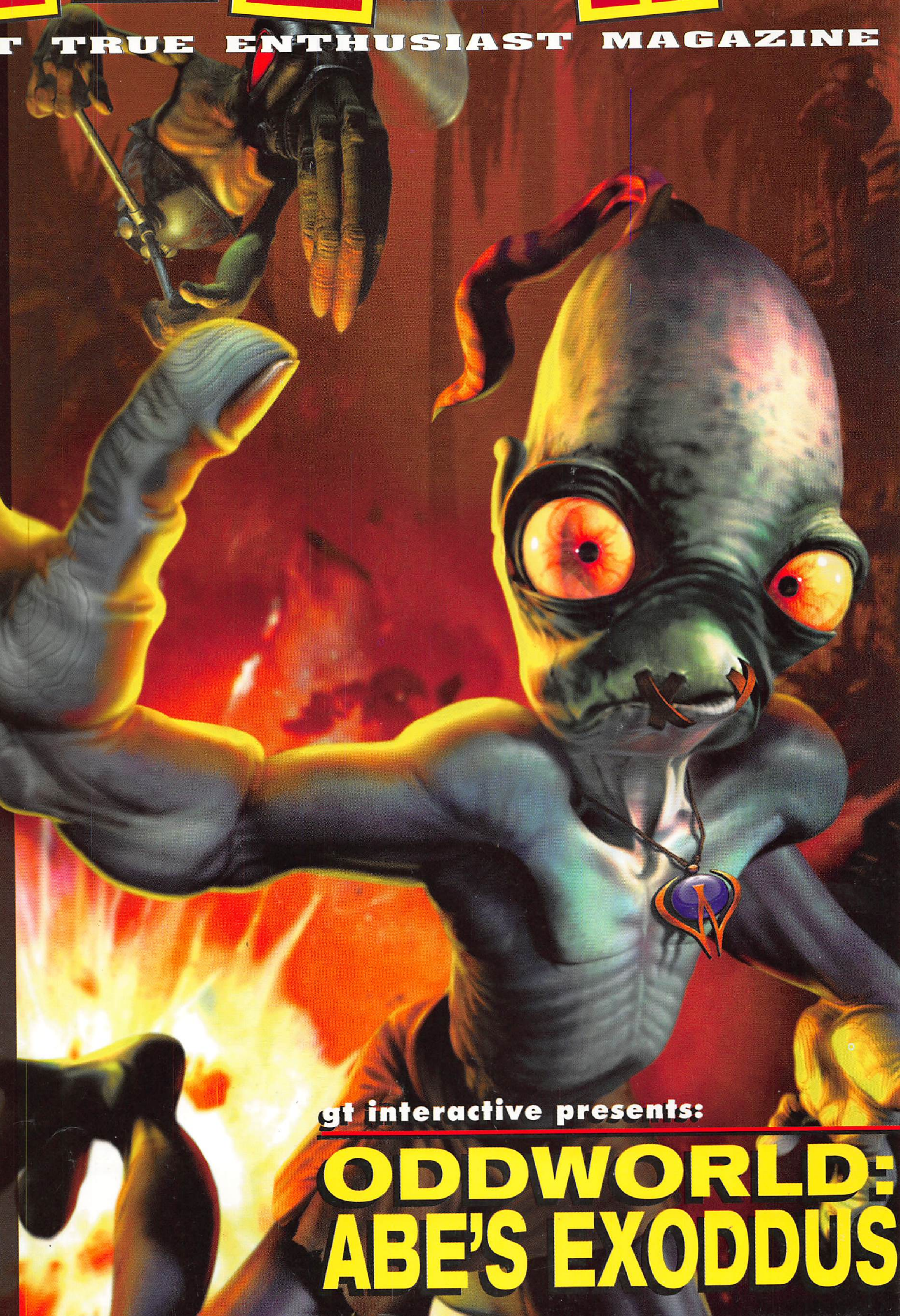
# GAMEFAN

THE LAST TRUE ENTHUSIAST MAGAZINE

OLUME 6 • ISSUE 8
AUGUST 1998

FINAL FANTASY VIII
ファイナルファンタジーVIII

**FIRST SHOTS!**



## E3

**32 PAGES OF COVERAGE**

**DREAMCAST: FIRST INFO!**

N2O

NINJA

MORTAL KOMBAT 4

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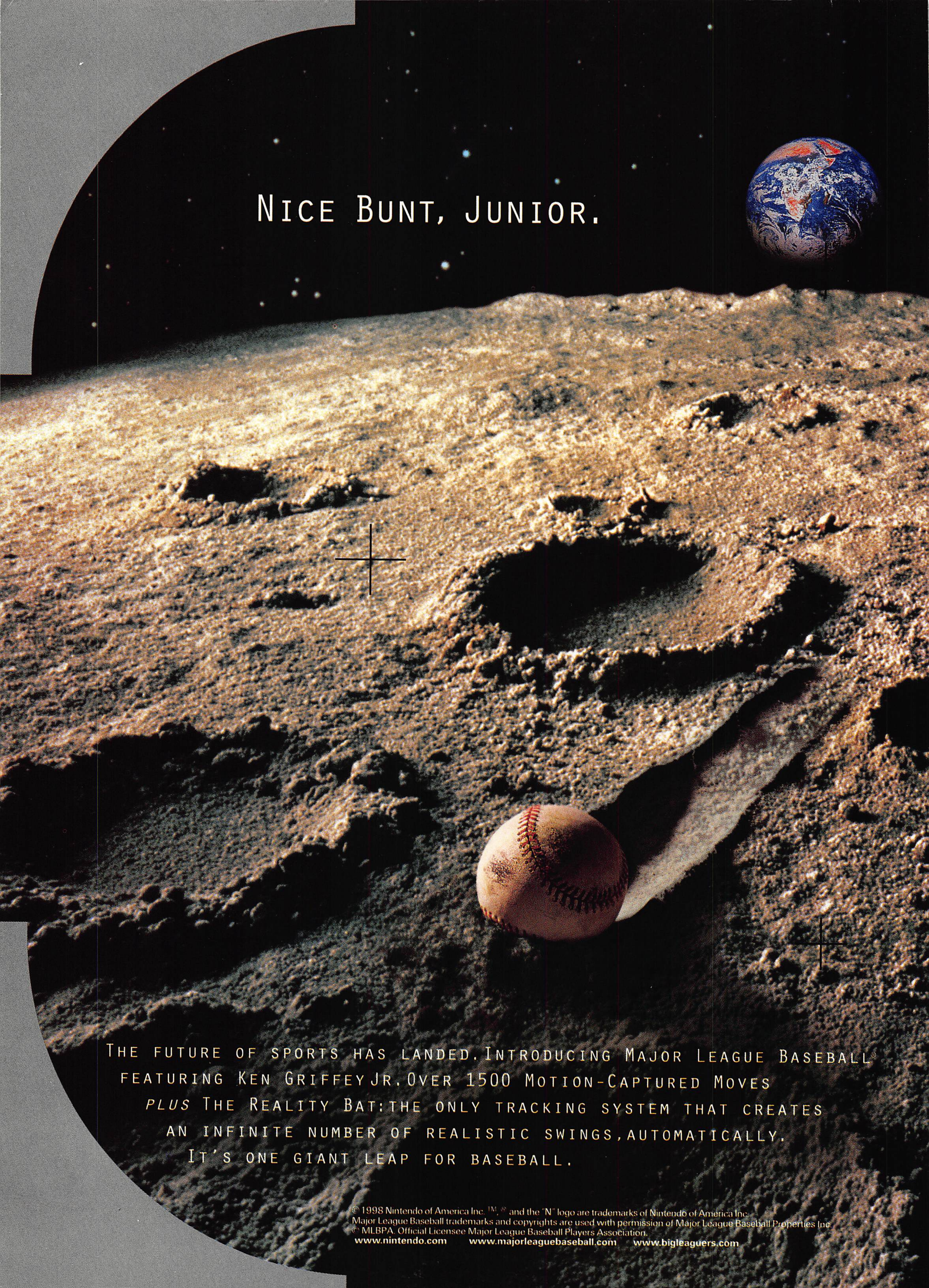
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# Ed Zone



> "...the generally harder-edge of the old GameFan is back..."

As you grasp this ultra-thick magazine in your happy little mitts, we've just returned from the industry's biggest trade show in the world, E3. What did we see? What did we do? Skip ahead about a hundred pages or so for the first and best coverage straight from the show floor.

Above and beyond the 'The Greatest Show on Earth', the past month saw the Japanese unveiling of Sega's Dreamcast. SOJ's next big thing promises to possess the power to shift over 3 million polygons per second and give their Model 3 board a race to the bitter end for sheer graphical power. GameFan anxiously awaits (that's a mild understatement) its imminent Japanese arrival in mid-November. And after some in-depth conversations with Sega of America, we're confidently awaiting its US debut as well (clear all thoughts of 32X from your minds, forever).

As we get further into 'GameFan: Year One', we've received a great deal of support for the new direction the magazine has taken. Sure. some people aren't too happy with it, but those that've been with the pub since the first year seem to love the 'new' GameFan. Probably doesn't hurt that the comic, the return of imports in droves, and the generally harder-edge of the old GameFan is back.

For those of you that are unhappy with the recent inclusion of PC games and the Code Vault (many due to the perception that they've somehow taken away from the other sections) let me assure you that they do not in any way detract from the rest of the book. The inclusion of PC games and the Code Vault was made possible by adding pages, and not taking away from the rest of the issue. I feel it's very important to make that distinction (and to curb some of the more rabid fans that thought it was "killing" other sections of the mag—no really, I got mail stating just that...scary).

I also want to thank **all** of you that took the time to write in and share your thoughts on the magazine and what needed to be changed and what didn't. While we received a decent amount of 'flame' mail, the sheer quantity of positive mail and the overwhelmingly positive response from the industry at the recent E3 show certainly gave us the idea that we're moving in the correct direction (that's another one of those mild understatement thingies).

So as we forge ahead into the second half of the year, it's with the knowledge that the hard-core fans are pleased. After all, that's what GameFan has always been about: Hard-core gamers. Sure, others may 'Imagine' that they're 'hard-core', but you know it and I know it. There is only one place the true-gamer calls home: GameFan,the last true enthusiast magazine. ***ECM***


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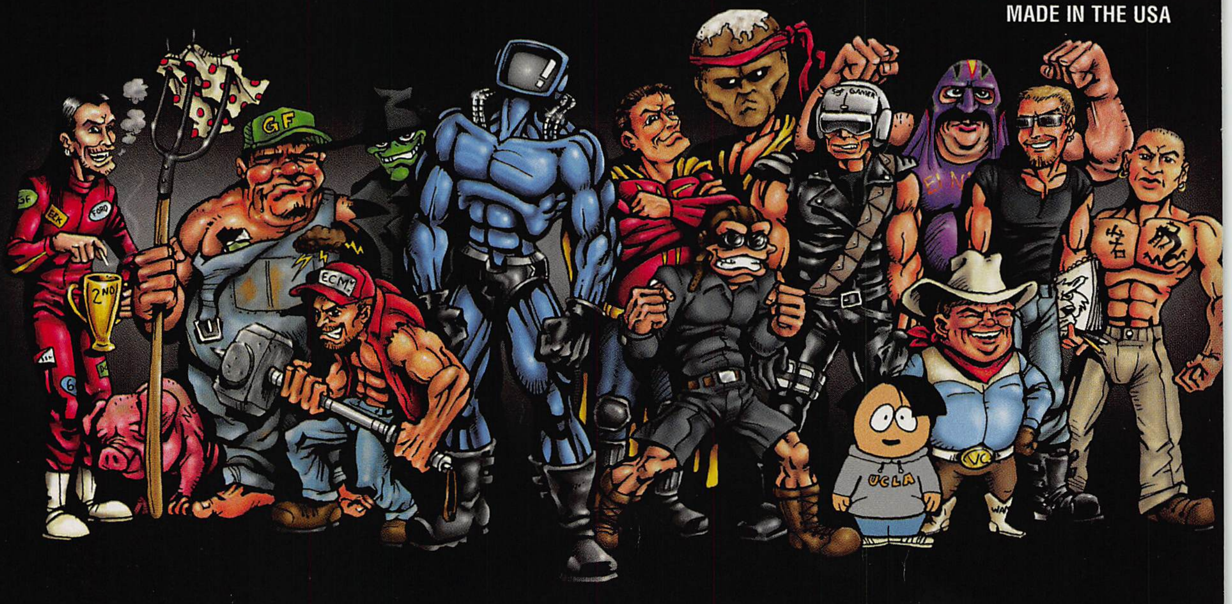
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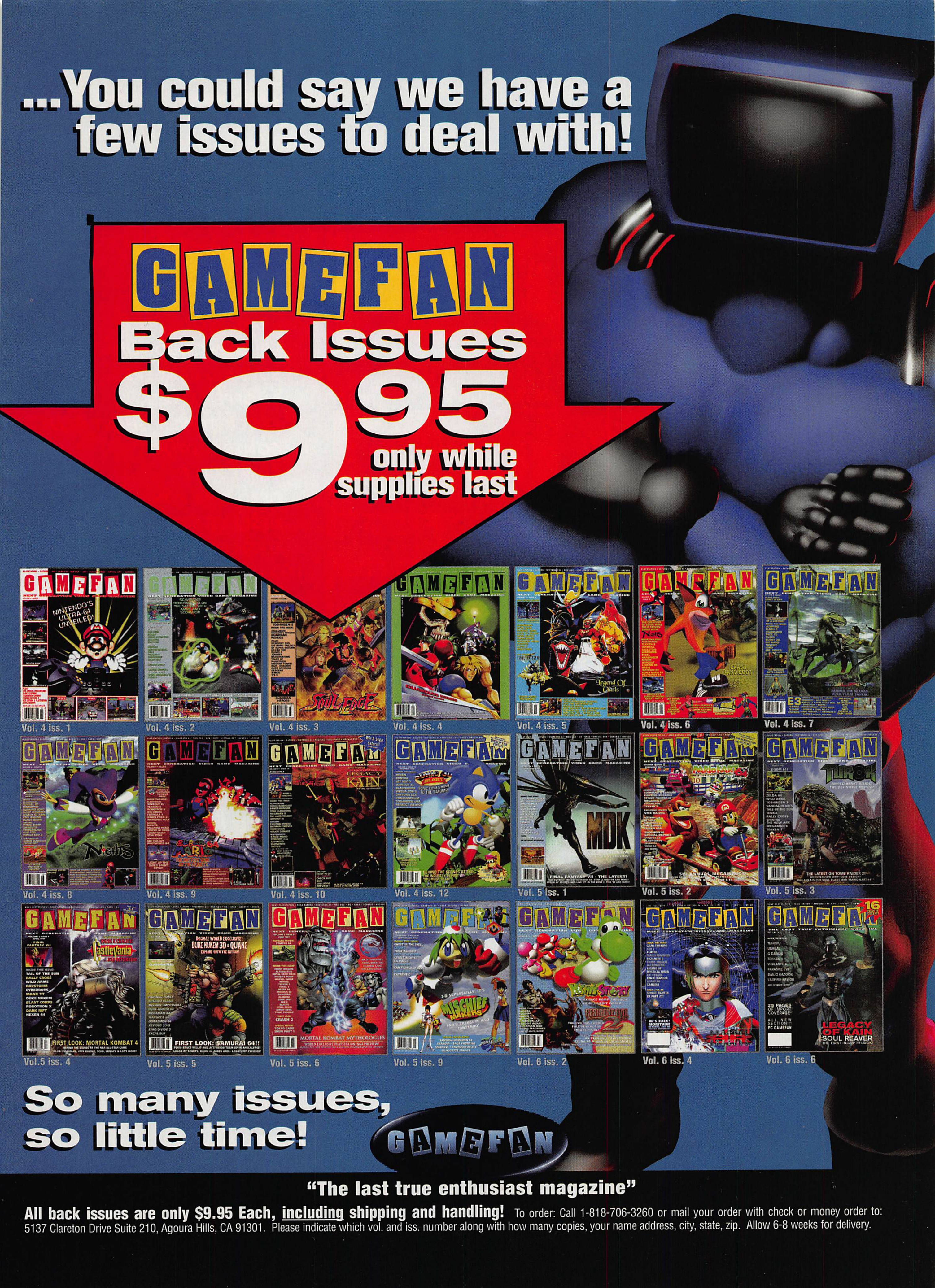
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A METROPOLIS PUBLICATION

GameFan (ISSN#: 1092-7212) Volume 6 Issue 7 August 1998. Published monthly by Metropolis Publications, Inc. 5137 Clareton Drive Suite 210, Agoura Hills, CA 91301. One year subscription (12 issues) is $24.99. Foreign and Canada add $10 per year. Please remit in U.S. funds only. Please allow 60 days for your first issue. Periodical Postage Rates Paid at Los Angeles, CA and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send change of address form to: GameFan, 5137 Clareton Drive Suite 210, Agoura Hills, CA 91301.

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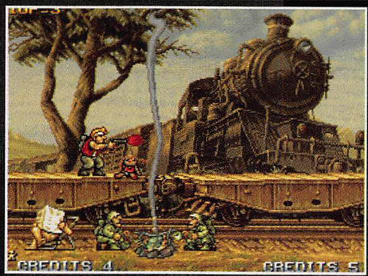












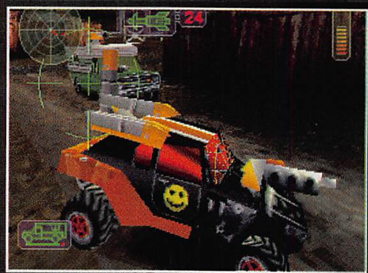






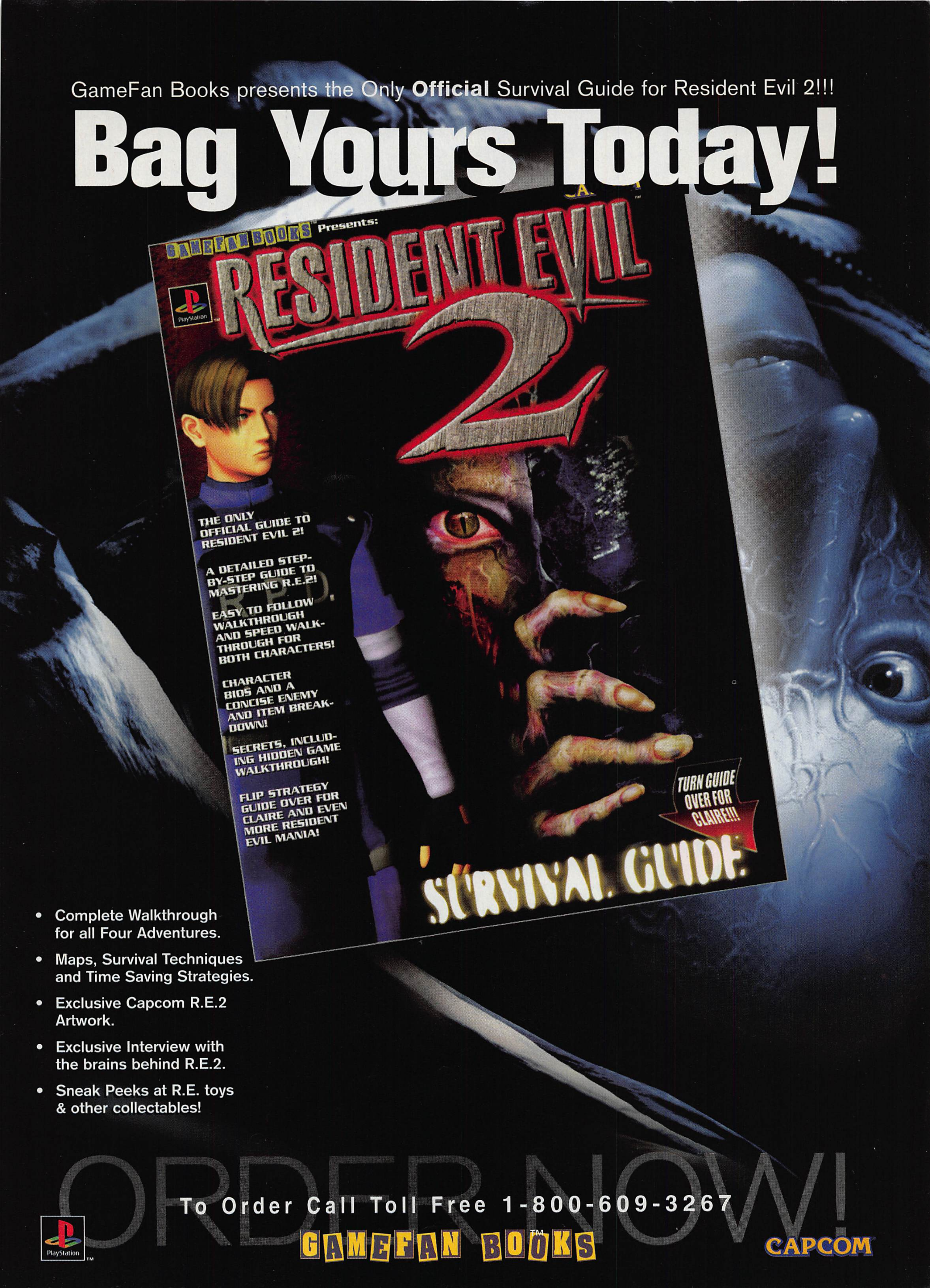






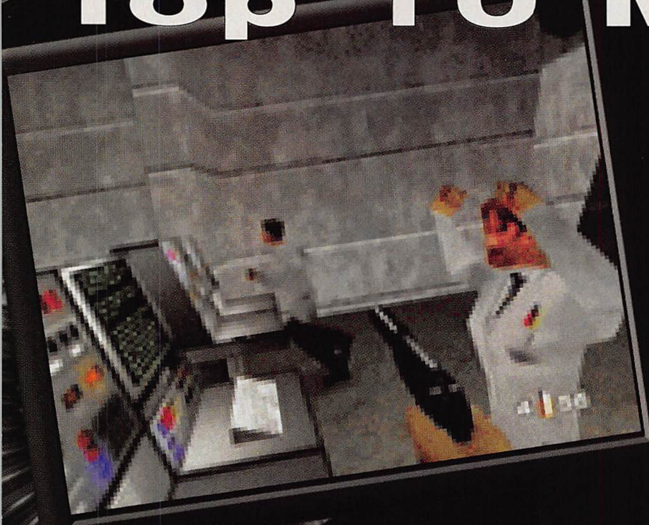





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# Top 10 Most Wanted

FOR THE WEEK ENDING 5/31/98



## READERS' TOP TEN

1) *GoldenEye* - N64
2) *Final Fantasy 7* - PS
3) *Resident Evil 2* - PS
4) *Quake 64* - N64
5) *Tomb Raider 2* - PS
6) *Final Fantasy Tactics* - PS
7) *WCW Vs. NWO* - N64
8) *Yoshi's Story* - N64
9) *Need For Speed III* - PS
10) *Gex 2: Enter the Gecko* - PS

**1 GoldenEye N64**
READERS' TOP TEN

## READERS' MOST WANTED

1) *Zelda: TOOT* - N64
2) *Mission: Impossible* - N64
3) *Parasite Eve* - PS
4) *Metal Gear Solid* - PS
5) *F-Zero X* - N64



6) *Final Fantasy VIII* - PS
7) *Turok 2* - N64
8) *Grand Theft Auto* - PS
9) *Shining Force III* - SS
10) *Street Fighter EX 2* - P

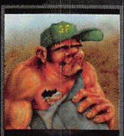
## GAMEFAN EDITORS' TOP TEN



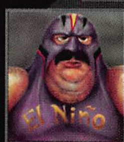
1. *LOK: Soul Reaver* - PS
2. *Metal Slug 2* - Neo Geo
3. *Banjo Kazooie* - N64
4. *Shining Force 3* - SS
5. *Hot Shots Golf* - PS
6. *Total Annihilation: CC* - PC
7. *Quake* - N64
8. *Resident Evil 2* - PS
9. *GoldenEye* - N64
10. *F-Zero* - N64



1. *VOOT (Virtual On 2)* - Arcade
2. *Daytona 2: BOTE* - Arcade
3. *Tenchu* - PS (Import)
4. *Forsaken* - PS
5. *Virtual On Netlink* - SS
6. *Metal Slug 2* - Neo Geo
7. *Hot Shots Golf* - PS
8. *Vampire Savior* - SS (Import)
9. *Bump 'N Jump* - Arcade
10. *Street Fighter 2 ver. 1* - Arcade



1. *FIFA: World Cup '98* - PS
2. *Wipeout* - PS
3. *Vigilante 8* - PS
4. *Total Annihilation: CC* - PC
5. *Descent* - PS
6. *Tetris* - Gameboy
7. *Phantasy Star Coll.* -SS(Import)
8. *Wipeout XL* - PS
9. *Mario Kart 64* - N64
10. *Forsaken* - PS




1. *VR Baseball '99* - PS
2. *Gran Turismo* - PS
3. *All-Star Baseball* - N64
4. *Might & Magic VI* - PC
5. *SNAFU* - Intellivision
6. *Tekken 3* - PS
7. *Bloody Roar* - PS
8. *Banjo Kazooie* - N64
9. *Quake* - Mac
10. *Azure Dreams* - PS




1. *Metal Slug 2* - Neo Geo
2. *N2O* - PS
3. *Daytona 2* - Arcade
4. *Skull Monkeys* - PS
5. *Shining Force 3* - SS
6. *Mortal Kombat 4* - N64
7. *Clayman Clayman* - PS
8. *Saturn Bomberman* - SS
9. *Airborne Rangers* - C64
10. *Time Crisis 2* - Arcade




1. *Final Fantasy VII* - PC
2. *Parasite Eve* - PS (Import)
3. *Virtual On 2* - Arcade
4. *Warcraft II* - PC
5. *StarCraft* - PC
6. *Granstream Saga* - PS
7. *Metal Slug 2* - Neo Geo
8. *Tenchu* - PS (Import)
9. *Virtual On* - Arcade
10. *Racing Destruction Set* - C64

## WIN

**THE GAME SYSTEM OF YOUR CHOICE! ENTER TODAY!**

All you have to do to enter the drawing is write down a list of your top 10 favorite games and the 10 games you want the most that aren't out yet, on a piece of paper or a postcard then send them to: GAMEFAN TOP TEN, 5137 Clareton Dr., Suite 210 Agoura Hills, CA 91301

**First Prize:** Pocket GameBoy

**Second Prize:** Your choice of one of the Picks of the Month in Viewpoint.

**Third Prize:** A FREE year of GameFan! The best magazine in the universe!

**Congratulations** to last month's winners:

| First Prize: | Second Prize: | Third Prize: |
|---|---|---|
| Michael Salbato | Oscar Salazar Reyes | Pete Martinez III |
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Drawing is limited to One (1) entry per person per month. Drawings will be held on the 21st of each month. The three (3) winners will be notified by mail and listed on this page. For a complete list of rules and regulations write: GameFan Top Ten with self addressed & stamped envelope.

## DEVELOPER'S TOP TEN

**This Month's Guest:**
**Shaba Games (AKA Shaba Collective, Shaba Crew, etc... Shaba (duh!)**

1. *Total Annihilation* - PC
2. *Wave Race* - N64
3. *Civilization* - PC
4. *Star Control II* - 3DO
5. *GameDay '98* - PS
6. *Dungeon Master* - Atari 520st
7. *Archon* - Commodore 64
8. *Populous* - PC
9. *Turrican* - Amiga
10. *Quake II* - PC





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**Your Name**____________________ **Age**_______ **Address** ____________________

**City**____________________ **State**_______ **Zip**_______ ☐ **Male** ☐ **Female**

Shirt size: (circle one) ☐ Small ☐ Medium ☐ Large ☐ Xlarge

**1. Which system(s) do you currently own?**
☐ Nintendo 64 ☐ Saturn
☐ PlayStation ☐ Super NES
☐ Genesis ☐ Gameboy
☐ GameGear ☐ Other

**2. Do you have regular access to a personal computer?**
☐ Yes ☐ No

**3. Approximately how many hours a week do you play?**
Home Video Games __________ hours per week
Arcade Video Games__________ hours per week
Computer (PC) Games__________ hours per week

**4. Have you ever visited a video game website?**
☐ Yes ☐ No

**5. Have you ever visited www.gamefan.com?**
☐ Yes ☐ No

**6. How many games do you buy per year?**
________ Video Games ________ Computer Games

**7. How many games do you rent per year?**
________Video Games ________ Computer Games

**8. Approximately how much do you spend on electronic entertainment each year?** $________ per year

**9. What are your favorite types of games?**
(10=favorite, 1=least favorite)
Action______ Action/RPG______ Adventure______ Driving______
Fighting______ Platform______ Puzzle______ Sports______
Strategy______ RPG______ Simulation______
Other____________________

**10. Where do you buy most of your games?**
☐ Dept. Store ☐ E. Boutique ☐ Babbages
☐ Software Etc. ☐ Toys R Us ☐ Sears
☐ Toy Store ☐ Mail Order ☐ Other

**11. Where do you buy most of your magazines?**
☐ Software Store ☐ Grocery/Drug store
☐ Book Store ☐ Mini Mart
☐ Newsstand ☐ Subscription
Other____________________

**12. How much time do you spend with each issue?**________Hrs.

**13. How many times per month do you refer to the issue?**________

**14. Do you plan to buy the next issue?** ☐ Yes ☐ No

**15. How many people look at your issue?** # ________

**16. Which other video game publications do you read?**
Name:____________________
What possessed you?____________________

**17. My household income:** (check closest answer/optional)
☐ $20,000-$30,000 ☐ $30,000-$50,000
☐ $50,000-$70,000 ☐ $70,000-over

**18. What other activities do you enjoy?**
☐ Music ☐ Sports
☐ Movies ☐ Internet
☐ Other____________________

Send Completed Survey to: Reader Survey, 5137 Clareton Drive, Suite 210, Agoura Hills, CA 91301 all entries must be received by October 31, 1998. For a complete list of rules and details send a self addressed envelope to the address above. Void where prohibited by law.

GAMEFAN

**"The last true enthusiast magazine"**

**GameFan Magazine** 5137 Clareton Drive Suite 210, Agoura Hills, California 91301

# GameFan Exclusive Interview



## direction and vision

### An Interview with Sega of America's Bernie Stolar

**ECM recently had the chance to chat with Sega's president, Bernie Stolar. While some of this may be 'old news' in light of recent events, most of it should give a great deal of insight into the current goings-on at Sega of America. Without further ado, take it away, Bernie:**

**"With Nintendo and Sony duking it out this year, we believe we have a very strong window of entry and are confident of the business plan for the new platform next year."**

**Bernie Stolar:** The press release about our financial status a few months ago was expected on Wall Street. That statement allowed this company to get into 1999 by cleaning up and driving all the mature products shipping now. Our focus [in 1999] is and will be Dreamcast, and the software to back it up. The important thing this year is mainly to the brand [Sega], in saying that we're going to sell well over 1,000,000 Genesis units, as well as 4,000,000 Genesis software units. Saturn units and its software will still be sold at retail, and a combination of all other Sega related products and services (i.e. Sega GameWorks, SegaSoft, Sega Entertainment, Sega Online, etc.) will show the brand's strength and that Sega is still visible in the gaming community. With Nintendo and Sony duking it out this year, we believe we have a very strong window of entry and are confident of the business plan for the new platform next year. Present software on the market is not fresh, but rehashed product that's not new or adventurous. What we're planning to deliver is a system head and shoulders above the rest with software support way ahead of everyone else.

Software support will not only come from Japan, but from the U.S. as well, especially with the purchase of Visual Concepts to bring back the old, esteemed Sega Sports line of games. At launch in the US in 1999, there will be around 10-12 first and third party company titles. On Dec 31, 1999 we should have around 20-30 titles.

**GF:** *This might be a silly question, since I don't think you'll answer it straight out. Recently, a web site put up a launch date for the Dreamcast as December '98. Now, this is totally out of the question, right?*

**Stolar:** Dreamcast is scheduled for release in Japan in November '98 and in the fall of '99 in the US. I've been talking to many retailers and they all want us to come back competitively, especially since the Dreamcast will be sold at a very competitive price. Also, we'll have full distribution at our day of launch; Dreamcast won't be available at only 3,500 stores, but more like 15,000 stores.

**GF:** *What do you think of the reputation some believe you've earned as 'Sega's Arch-Villain'? Does it bother you? Do you care?*

**Stolar:** Like Darth Vader?

**"Dreamcast is scheduled for release in Japan in November '98 and in the fall of '99 in the US."**

**GF:** *Yeah, most of the Internet perceives you as the 'Vader of Sega' and as the 'Saturn Killer', by many people in the industry.*

**Stolar:** You know, it's a real competitive world we work in, and I'm one of the most competitive people around. I love competition; I always have. When people say those things, I get a smile on my face because it means they have a problem in the competitive area.

Saturn was a difficult proposition for the company. When I came to Sega, my charter was to make Sega profitable so we could be a stronger competitor in the long-run. I knew the asset of the company was the software, first and foremost. That, to me, is the core, that to me, is the child, and it needs to be protected. I couldn't afford to lose that asset on a platform that wasn't living up to expectations. The smarter strategy would be to leverage those assets on a platform that could garner more industry support.

My mission, and one of this company's values, is that titles that aren't five star quality aren't shipping. And if you look around the third party community, there's a huge consolidation of third party companies. Why? Because the business is maturing and people are understanding you can't deliver titles that aren't quality. I picked up a New York Times the other day, and five flight simulators were featured. Who needs all five? According to NYT, three of the five are crap. So, does this explain the need for eight football titles on one platform? I don't think so.

**GF:** *Seeing as you're taking the 'quality over quantity' approach, remember Nintendo took that stance with their N64. How do you determine what's quality and what's not, since Nintendo's view of a good game is the quantity that has sold. "Since Cruis'n sold a million units, it must be a good game."?*

**Stolar:** I'm not objecting or putting rules and regulations for third parties on quality control. I think third parties know it's all about quality, which is why they're putting more emphasis on fewer, better titles.

**GF:** *So, you see the third party taking more of a role on quality? You firmly expect what third parties are going to be delivering to Dreamcast is going to be higher caliber than the past, because in order to stay competitive, they're going to have to do that?*

**"My mission, and one of this company's values, is that titles that aren't five star quality aren't shipping."**

**"My mission, and one of this company's values, is that titles that aren't five star quality aren't shipping."**

**Stolar:** Yes, and we're going to work with them. And to give them an incentive, we'll support them with our marketing programs.

**GF:** *Really? Wow, that's different...*

**Stolar:** Yes, so if you develop something that will help us drive our hardware, we'll help you. How many third party titles do you see on TV with the console? I believe we have a strong relationship with the 3rd party community. In Nintendo's case, their business model doesn't work because of the licensing situation. Ours does work with the help of marketing for third parties. We'll make them make money off their titles.

**GF:** *All trying to stay competitive.*

**Stolar:** Yeah, but are they giving a break to the third party community? And what about Sony? They come out with *Crash* at $34.95... Triple A title, a solid game. How is a third party adventure title going to compete with Sony's when it has a $49.95 price tag, because of the royalty rate? We're going to make sure they make money, because if they make money, we're helping each other.

**GF:** *Sega always has been an arcade-oriented company with all the support from the AM teams. While that's good, Saturn relied a bit too much on arcade translations. With the Dreamcast, will we see more exclusive stuff not seen anywhere but on the DC?*

**Stolar:** Five exclusive new games are being developed in the U.S. Also, Sega of Japan is working on a new title featuring popular Sega characters in a new gaming environment. We've got a number of games in the works that will be exclusive on Dreamcast, many of which are coming from arcade groups making games exclusively for Dreamcast.

**GF:** *Do you guys see yourselves relying more on SoJ than in the past?*

**Stolar:** We're doing more in-house development at Sega of America than we did in the past. Our PD team at Sega of America is growing and working on a number of games for the US launch. They are working very closely with SOJ PD teams in sharing game ideas and programming techniques. It's a valuable relationship for SOA and SOJ.

**GF:** *Less, really? Any particular reason?*

**Stolar:** What's happened is the market is different from what it was 10 years ago. It is bigger, broader, there's more people in it. You have to deliver different titles. That's why we beefed up our development and that's why we're looking at other developers that are uniquely different. The heritage and heart is always going to be the arcade. We'll never escape it and why should we? No one can compete with those AM games.

**GF:** *So, you've got the 3rd party support...*

**Stolar:** They'll be locked and loaded, ready to go...

**GF:** *So, do they have a lot of Dreamcast exclusive stuff going?*

**Stolar:** We're talking to them right now... They all have tools, libraries, documentation, and support.

**GF:** *What do you think of Kenji Eno debuting D2? Now, this is not a confirmed title for the Dreamcast, yet.*

**"Sega of Japan is working on a new title featuring popular Sega characters in a new gaming environment."**

**Stolar:** I had lunch with Kenji Eno two days ago... I'll leave it at that.

**GF:** *I know at E3, you guys haven't announced any plans, per se, to show the new hardware at all. Nothing behind closed doors or even on video tape. What's the deal?*

**Stolar:** No comment...

**GF:** *(Sigh)... I must commend you guys. You've been keeping everything so hush-hush.*

**Stolar:** (grins) We have a curve, a percentile curve, of where we need to be. So, our silence is because we don't want to get this thing revved up too early. It's being controlled and staged based on what we need to accomplish and by when.

**GF:** *So, that's what your statement will be? 'It's in control' or 'no comment'?*

**Stolar:** Well, prior to E3, that's the policy. At E3, there is a 'crescendo curve.' You'll know more when you get to E3.

**GF:** *Where do you see SoA in a year?*

**Stolar:** With the new system and platform development, we will be better than 50% market share within a half year after we launch. I'm going to push everyone here to the brink, including myself. Of what's going to take place in the whole new area, we'll be the lead company.

**GF:** *You base this judgement on...??*

**Stolar:** We base this on: Great products, terrific quality, and terrific communication. I think everything revolves around one thing: content, and the next thing is distribution. And we'll have both. And I'll go up against Sony any day on the bet that our content is better than their content. On an equal playing field, if anybody believes they have better content based off their own development teams, I'll take that bet.

**GF:** *Having said that, you still have to deal with the PlayStation and the N64. Why should a third party company, who has a hot title coming out, bring the game to the Dreamcast, a console just starting out, rather than the PlayStation, which has 17-18 million units worldwide? What would be the incentive to do so?*

**Stolar:** Well, we have a profitable business model. They [Sony & Nintendo] might not necessarily have a profitable business model for a third party company, no matter how many units they have.

**GF:** *One thing that PCs had over consoles is Internet access for multiplayer game support. Is the Dreamcast positioned to take full advantage of Internet gaming access?*

**Stolar:** Yes... I can't say what the details are, but we believe in online entertainment. I believe we're taking the right steps to deliver great content in the online console arena.

**GF:** *Okay, anything you want to add as we close?*

**Stolar:** Let me just say this. We're excited, the people here are excited, and although we've gone through some changes, the morale, energy, and enthusiasm throughout our whole office is way up... I couldn't be more excited.

**GF:** *Thanks for your time.*

**"And I'll go up against Sony any day on the bet that our content is better than their content."**



The Adventures of
MONITAUR
I KNEW IT.
BM, Inc.
PLATYPUS 33™
POSTY, WE'RE GOING TO NEED SOME HELP ON THIS ONE.
I KNOW JUST THE GUY.
SGT. GAMER, COME IN SGT. GAMER.
WEEOOOOO
BEEOOOP
BZZ CRAK!
... GAMER. COME IN SGT. GAMER.
BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA
THIS IS GAMER. WHO'S THIS? HOW DID YOU GET THIS CHANNEL?
TAC TAC TAC
Sgt. GAMER
GAMER! IT'S ME, POSTY. SO WHERE ARE YA? WHAT'VE YA BEEN UP TO? OVER.
POSTMEISTER, MY MAN! I JUST GOT BACK FROM THE NUCLEAR SAFETY TALKS IN INDIA, AND WAS JUST ABOUT TO SETTLE DOWN AND PLAY SOME "METAL GEAR SOLID".


WOW, GREAT. HEY LISTEN, THE CREEPS THAT HURT US, WELL WE TRACED THE EVIDENCE BACK TO THE BLOWMEISTER'S BOYS. WE COULD USE YOUR HELP. HOW SOON CAN YOU GET HERE?
...I'M ON MY WAY!
BEEP!
OVER 'N OUT!
TIME FOR A LITTLE PAYBACK.
LATER IN AGOURA HILLS, CA...
BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA
POSTAL CAVE
HEY, POSTY, YOU PSYCHOTIC SON-OF-A-BI
GAMER! GOOD TO SEE YOU, MAN!
SO WE GONNA GET DIRTY ON THIS ONE?
YEAH, IT'S GONNA BE HAIRY, BUT NOT TO WORRY--
KA-CHUNK!
YA SEE-
--WE GOT A FEW SUPRISES FOR THOSE BASTITCHES, TOO.
POSTY
C'MON, LET'S GO SAY HI TO THE REST OF THE GANG.


IT'S TIME TO LET PEOPLE KNOW WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THEY MESS WITH THE BEST. LET'S KICK SOME ASS.
GF
EEK
FORD
2ND
GF
ECM


Sgt GAMER
UCLA
VC
SO THE NEW TEAM IS HERE AND HERE TO STAY. BE SURE TO TUNE IN NEXT MONTH FOR MONITAUR AND CO. WREAKING HAVOC AT E3, BECAUSE "THIS ONE'S FOR BILLY".
'98

# VIEWPOINT

**Legend**
- **G**raphics
- **C**ontrol
- **P**lay mechanics
- **M**usic
- **O**riginality



ECM · EL NIÑO · REUBUS · SHIDOSHI · EGGO · DANGOHEAD · WAKA




## Azure Dreams
PlayStation
Konami
RPG



One of the most original RPGs to hit the home system, *Azure Dreams* will make you smile. Ascend to the top of the monster tower, collecting gold, items, and eggs on your quest to discover what happened to your father. Also a passage into manhood, your exploits in the tower will make you famous, bringing riches and fame not only to you, but your impoverished town as well. Personally, my favorite aspect is what I call the *Monster Rancher* mode: Hatch familiar eggs and breed yourself the best familiar you can. It is your familiar which will get you to the top...

| G | C | P | M | O | Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 88 |

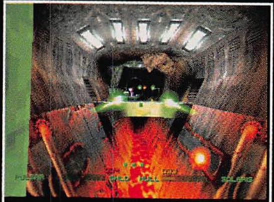
Randomly generated dungeons? Now that's what I call replay value! You gotta love the fact that breeding your own monster and having it fight beside you is the best! But on the downside, knowing that you have the task of climbing and fighting over and over will get a bit repetitious and have you chuckin' that PS controller at the wall. What? Died on the 98th floor? Start all over, pal. <Waaaah!> Better level up as much as you can and take the whole healing herb farm with ya cuz it's gonna get nasty. Pretty soon you'll even forget who your dad was...

| G | C | P | M | O | Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 8 | 10 | 87 |

*Chocobo's Mysterious Dungeon* meets *Monster Rancher*, with a little bit of *SimCity* mixed in as you remodel your home town with your riches. Breeding familiars and gaining status amongst the people in your town is fun, but having to climb 99 randomly generated floors of the Monster Tower without returning to town (you start at the first floor every time you enter) is too daunting a task for me. If this is for you, there's a whole lot of game here.

| G | C | P | M | O | Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 8 | 8 | 6 | 8 | 83 |

## Forsaken
PlayStation
Acclaim
3D Corridor



Looks like Acclaim has managed to 'steal' the show with this hard-hitting mix of the PC classic *Descent* and a scene from the L.A. riots. *Forsaken* packs quite a punch in multiple areas, from its head-spinning visuals to the load of character options and weapons that are sure to let gamers find their own style of play. My one knock would be that the control tends to put the hurt on your center of gravity at times, and without analog, you end up battling the targeting system more than you do enemies. Still, this is easily one of the better PlayStation titles to fly our way this year, and if 3D shooters are your thing, *Forsaken* won't disappoint.

| G | C | P | M | O | Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 88 |

Promises of 32-bit technology blowing the eyes of hard-core gamers all over the globe were not realized till now. *Forsaken* is a site to behold; dizzying 60 fps power, absolutely no flaws in its graphic integrity, incredible light sourcing effects... the list goes on. With abundant weapon power-ups, a generous amount of characters, and analog compatibility, the whole package just comes together nicely. Forget all past 3D corridor shooters you've played, this comes highly recommended, though you might want to get a checkup with your doctor before playing (poor Eggo...).

| G | C | P | M | O | Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 96 |

If you liked *Descent*, you're going to wet yourself over *Forsaken*. What separates *Forsaken* from *Descent* is that it is easier to control and maintain your equilibrium. An auto leveling feature always rights your ship when you enter a room, keeping you from getting all ass-backwards. The graphics are stunning; the frame rate, jaw-dropping; and the light sourcing, scintillating. The missions are fun and straightforward and the multiple vehicles and many power-ups will keep you highly entertained. Just wait until you see the N64 version...

| G | C | P | M | O | Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | 9 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 90 |

## Granstream Saga
PlayStation
THQ
RPG



THQ has a winner with this one. The graphics, music, voices, combat, AI, and story are all excellent. There's skill involved in defeating the monsters in real-time combat, and the interface puts you more into the game than a simple "Attack" command that most RPGs have. Throw in some anime cutscenes to satisfy the Shidoshi in all of us, and the only thing missing is the detail on the characters' faces. Don't let that dissuade you from looking into this one.

| G | C | P | M | O | Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | 9 | 8 | 9 | 8 | 92 |

Now this is getting scary: THQ, once one of the most reviled companies in the history of gaming, is making great move after great move with acquisitions such as *Granstream Saga*. Picking up one of the few games Sony left behind in Japan, they've certainly seemed to hit upon a winning strategy. Beyond the smooth, 60 fps visuals and solid environs, this one is wonderfully translated and many an RPG fan will be quite pleased with it—can't go wrong with a game featuring some of the original creators of the venerable Y's saga. You do have to wonder what happened to their faces, though... it's kinda' spooky.

| G | C | P | M | O | Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 8 | 84 |

THQ is definitely getting very wise picking up the 'lost' import games that we thought we'd never see (*GS* held its rank in Japan for a good month in the top 30!). And when THQ first grabbed *Ghost in the Shell*, I knew that they were heading in the right direction. After I finally sat down and got a crack at it, I found that the game has all the elements that will have you glued to your PS. Whether your preference is puzzle, strategy, or just plain RPG, *GS* will satisfy all those in one sitting. This solid action/RPG is a fine example of what we we're missing here in the states, and I'm very relieved that they have more coming on the way. Thank you, THQ!

| G | C | P | M | O | Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 90 |

## N20
PlayStation
Fox Interactive
Shooter



OH YEAH!!! I may not get any 'traditional' shooters in this godless country, but at least I get some brain-sprainingly insane 3D shooters! The euphoric, ecstasy-ridden, mind-altering rush I derive from this title can be likened to only one thing: Forcing writers like the invincible El Niño to play through games they refer to as mere '*Gyruss* clones' (what did you think I was gonna say?). The single best-looking PS game to date, this would be the epitome of the 'all sizzle, no substance' UK-crafted game, only it's got gameplay blazing forth from every groove in the bleedin' disc. What more can I say?! Buy it!!!

| G | C | P | M | O | Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | 9 | 9 | 10 | 9 | 96 |

This is gonna make ECM gag, but I wasn't that overjoyed about *N20*. Yes, the graphics are mind-bending; yes, it has tight control; and yes, it does move at 60fps (at least in one player mode). I just can't get past the fact that it isn't much more than a 32-bit *Gyruss* if developed by Timothy Leary. The weapons are standard fare, the enemies are completely unoriginal (hey, look at the really evil insects!) and the soundtrack is by that God-awful Crystal Method. Look, *N20* is still a fun shooter, but that's where it ends. It's just a shooter—and an unoriginal one at that. Obsessive shooter players (like ECM) will drool... the rest will see it as nothing more than a point of passing interest.

| G | C | P | M | O | Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | 8 | 8 | 6 | 6 | 84 |

The graphics are twisted and the music (*The Crystal Method*) screams to be blasted out of wall-sized speakers in a warehouse. The frame rate is an evil 60 fps, and the gameplay is there. However, it's not so much the shooting that makes *N20* enjoyable, but the overall experience—hurtling down tunnels at light speed with industrial music blaring and psychedelic colors and lighting effects passing you by. It's pure joy if you're looking for instant gratification, but I have this nagging feeling that a lot of people won't "get" this game (I'm not talking about buying it). *N20* would fit right in at a dance club on a big-screen with flashy lights.

| G | C | P | M | O | Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | 8 | 8 | 10 | 9 | 89 |

## Road Rash 3D
PlayStation
EA
Racing/Action



I loved *Road Rash* back in the golden days of the Genesis. Few games gave me that adrenaline rush that this hybrid mix of motorcycle racing and street fighting delivered. However, now with its big budget soundtrack license, *Road Rash 3D* seems more like a cross-marketing money maker. With great music, decent graphics, and good racing playability, why didn't they add the little nice extras like Dual Shock compatibility or a two-player mode? In any case, *Road Rash 3D* is a pretty solid game that will probably do great on the market, but if you want to recapture that old *Road Rash* feeling, then it's time to dust off that old Genesis in the attic.

| G | C | P | M | O | Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 7 | 83 |

EA has hit a pretty ugly pot hole this time out. I figured, what with the heavy duty amount of time this game spent in development, that it must mean they were really going to town on it. Turns out it seems that someone took one of its patented chains to it. The big problem is not the graphics nor is it really the control. The big issue lies with the fact that the combat portion of the series has finally and irreparably taken a back seat to the racing action. I don't know about you, but I played the *RR* games for scab-inducing joy, not its virtues as a straight ahead racing game. Sure, it was nice to win and get better bikes, but for me it was all about sending 'rashers' into ground-fusing spills, not racing a la *Ridge Racer*. Oh well, there's always Dreamcast...

| G | C | P | M | O | Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 7 | 75 |

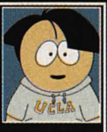
One of my fondest memories, as a wee boy in Tijuana, was playing *Road Rash*, on my Genesis. It was so much fun to barrel down those stretches of deserted (or not-so-deserted) road, whacking people with lead pipes and chains. Over the years, *Road Rash* has worn itself out, in need of a major overhaul. That overhaul has finally come, but I fear it is too late. *Road Rash 3D* just doesn't jumpstart me like past versions. The graphics, while polygonal, are average; the gameplay is average; and the music, in my old age, is just plain annoying. The luster is gone, my friends, and it makes me sad.

| G | C | P | M | O | Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 68 |



Check us out online at - http://www.gamefan.com

The graphics, frame rate, weapon design, and environments of *Vigilante 8* are much better than any *Twisted Metal* game to date. Add in analog control and Dual Shock vibration and you can see why *Vigilante 8* has been a winner since the day it first arrived in this office. I was sold the second I saw the beehive attack (launch a swarm of angry insects) and the flying saucer attack. Minor flaws? The analog is a bit too sensitive for my taste, and the frame rate drops in split screen mode... but you can't have everything.



G 9 | C 7 | P 8 | M 8 | O 9 | **92**

Call me crazy, but I was never a fan of the *Twisted Metal* series mainly cuz it didn't look good enough, or control well enough to actually get me hooked. As *V8* arrived here, I gave an exasperated sigh as it was described as a *Twisted Metal*-esque game. Well, after three hours of bullet-ridden carnage, this game is what *Twisted Metal* should've been a long time ago. Great kinetic graphic effects, with great control, and Dual Shock compatibility... damn this game is great, though I strangely get the same feeling whenever I drive down any Los Angeles freeway.

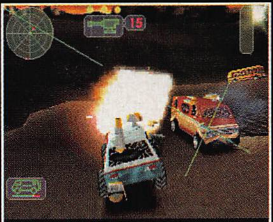


G 9 | C 9 | P 8 | M 8 | O 7 | **92**

If there ever was a *Twisted Metal* fan his name would be ECM. Now along comes *V8*, looking to usurp *TM* as the king of combat racers. The verdict: Success! Stunning graphics, precise control, and exploding cars, it's like an '80s action movie inside a video game. Luxoflux has gone way above and beyond the call of duty and is going to make life very difficult for SingleTrac's *Rogue Trip* and Sony's own *Twisted Metal 3*—better be on the stick, guys, cause it's an uphill battle all the way against this one. Sharp, no-breakup visuals, with high poly counts and a gaggle of great effects round out the new king of the combat racers. All others have to play catch-up starting now.



G 9 | C 9 | P 8 | M 7 | O 7 | **94**



**Vigilante 8**
**PlayStation**
**Activison**
**Combat Driving**

Ho hum... the novelties of gore are waning upon this dango, and while *BioFreaks* is far from the worst fighting game on the N64, it's far from being average. While its visuals are decent (worthy of note are the background designs), the graphics are rather bland with few special effects during lukewarm battles. But aside from the graphics, the game is one burden to bear when playing with an N64 pad, and the control is something to get used to... if you play it for that long. For those aficionados of limb-lopping fighting with few gameplay elements, this one's for you... plus a card from ECM's shrink.



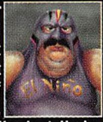
G 8 | C 6 | P 6 | M 7 | O 5 | **70**

It's games like *BioFreaks* that really make me shed a little tear for the project gone wrong. No, I'm not referring to the game's leading lunatics, a host of biological experiments with some serious chemical imbalances, but the tears that started to flow for gamers everywhere when I finally got around to *playing* this title. *BioFreaks* did a lot of things right for a fighter such as cool design, big arenas, and creative moves, but due to a lack of fluid play control, I'm afraid it won't cut it in the late rounds with the latest crop of 3-D fighters. One of the better N64 beat-'em-ups to date, but still no match for the likes of *Bloody Roar* or *Tekken 3*.



G 8 | C 5 | P 6 | M 7 | O 7 | **78**

Chalk this puppy up as another game that had potential, but failed to deliver. *BioFreaks* is the latest fighter from Midway and falls short of impressive. While full of some of the coolest looking combatants, and utilizing some nifty features like lost limbs and multi-tiered battle fields, *BioFreaks* ultimately suffers from a crummy fighting engine. Few moves and fewer pyrotechnics make it as painful to play as it is to listen to. This from a group that is giving us the stellar *MK4*.



G 8 | C 6 | P 5 | M 4 | O 8 | **69**



**BioFreaks**
**Nintendo 64**
**Midway**
**Fighting**

This is the best fighting game on the N64 to date. I can see the overflowing trucks leaving Midway headquarters enroute to the legions of screaming kids who will eat this one up in seconds. The graphics and frame rate are excellent, as is the game translation. <Donning my asbestos suit> But when it comes down to it, this game is still *MK*. To some of you, this is a good thing, but in this gamer's heart... a fighting game consists of excellent control, a wealth of moves, and parrying back and forth... not uppercuts and blood.



G 9 | C 7 | P 7 | M 7 | O 7 | **86**

The N64 has been hurting for a good (not decent) fighter, and some of the readers might hurt me for saying that *MK4* is the best fighter on the N64... (as I get my riot armor on). But the truth is that the *MK4* translation from the arcade is very good, with no missing moves and no major flaws in it's visuals. The backgrounds are excellent, and the gameplay, for the fanatics of *MK*, reminds me of the *MK2* style. Those fans of *MK* will rejoice, while I implore those anti-*MK*'ers or former fans to give this one a try.



G 9 | C 9 | P 8 | M 7 | O 7 | **88**

Unlike cardboard cut-out guy to the far left, I have very little problem with *MK4's* gameplay—probably has something to do with the fact that I can smack the resident *Street Fighter* king down without breaking a sweat. Anyhow, the quality of this translation speaks for itself. Minus a small drop in number of polygons and a slight dip in resolution this game is *Mortal Kombat 4*. Almost makes me wonder why they even need high-end proprietary hardware like Zeus when the N64 can pump out a game that looks this good. Needless to say, this is easily the best N64 fighter to date and will sell faster than Kid Fan taking grand prize in a pizza-eating contest (oh the horror...ulp).



G 9 | C 9 | P 8 | M 7 | O 7 | **93**



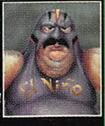
**Mortal Kombat 4**
**Nintendo 64**
**Midway**
**Fighting**

Not only do THQ have the PS covered with *Granstream Saga*, but they also have the first US N64 RPG, and before Japan on top of that! An excellent Action/RPG and one that will make a pretty large splash due in no small part to the failure of *Zelda* making an appearance up till now. The visuals are solid, and the lack of draw-in is simply stunning; you can practically see forever with no fog or pop-up. Story-wise, it's a good little adventure, though it's clearly skewed towards a younger age group—no complaints, though. What's next, THQ?



G 8 | C 8 | P 8 | M 6 | O 8 | **84**

It may not contain the wham-bang action of some of the other N64 titles out there, but *Quest 64* will nonetheless please RPG fans who are too impatient to wait for *Zelda*. With an interesting mix of real-time combat and a refreshing magic-using interface, *Quest 64* will be a good way for inexperienced gamers to wet their feet, as well as some simple fun for the more experienced out there. The one complaint? Too many damn random encounters! Nothing kills an RPG gamer's lust for adventure faster than to be bogged down by piddley little encounters. Oh well, nobody's perfect. Wow, this month I almost batted 1.000 in the good games department! Damn *BioFreaks*...



G 8 | C 8 | P 8 | M 8 | O 9 | **89**

An RPG on the N64 before *Zelda*??? Whoa, hell must have frozen over for this to happen... THQ must be commended for this fine effort, though I have a couple of gripes. The game starts out slowly, and I had to get some smelling salts out just to get me by the first 20 minutes of the game. The music could've been done with a little more pizazz, as it follows the noble yet boring melodies of past action/rpgs. That aside, the combat system is good, the graphics are excellent, and the story, while a bit simple, grows on you. And I do like the design of our hero even if it happens to mimic one of my favorite "little rascals." Though not a *Zelda* replacement by any means, it's certainly nice till *Zelda* does come around.



G 8 | C 8 | P 7 | M 7 | O 7 | **82**



**Quest 64**
**Nintendo 64**
**THQ**
**RPG**

With the huge disappointment of *House of the Dead* I tried not to expect much from *Burning Rangers*, but as a Sega faithful, I couldn't help it. Sonic Team, the makers of the unearthly *Nights*, wouldn't let me down in the last days of the Saturn, right? Well, aside from graphics, the excellent game control and original concept makes it an enjoyable romp. But that's about it, as the visuals are suffering (smoke comes out occasionally as the Saturn accesses), the music and voice acting are terrible, and the lack of any type of replayability makes *Burning Rangers* nothing but a passing fancy. Oh how I wish it would rain...



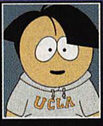
G 7 | C 9 | P 7 | M 6 | O 8 | **81**

It's the bottom of the ninth. Two outs, bases are loaded and *Burning Rangers* steps to the plate. The pitch! <Crack> *Burning Rangers* drives one up the middle as Sega management screams from the cheap seats (bleachers only for this crowd)! He rounds first and sets his sites on a double, but Sega Test is screaming for him to stop... he goes anyway. The play at second: *Burning Rangers* slides in for a highly disputed 'Safe!' call. A good idea that wasn't implemented as well as it could have been. The glitchy environs and questionable control certainly leave a bit to be desired. Still, it's the end of an era, and it's worth at least a rental on your part, but that's about it, <sigh>.



G 6 | C 7 | P 7 | M 5 | O 10 | **73**

*Burning Rangers* could have been big. There were a lot of good ideas put into this title, but I think the end product just didn't meet everyone's expectations. Putting out fires and rescuing people is original and entertaining for a game, and it always feels good to receive E-mail from grateful rescuees after a mission. Unfortunately, hopping around levels in search of the next door or switch can get dull fast. The dub is pretty horrific (Sega should've gone with subtitles), and the graphics on some of the levels are falling apart with glitchy polygons which were never fixed. It's a shame that the Saturn's career is ending like this...



G 7 | C 8 | P 8 | M 7 | O 9 | **83**



**Burning Rangers**
**Saturn**
**Sega**
**Action Adventure**

The best Neo-Geo game ever? And then some!!! Fans of the first will be in utter heaven, and will bow down to the raw, unfettered might of SNK. For this month, at least, I'm an SNK junkie on par with Shidoshi (I even think I'll give Blue Mary a big kiss!). Absolutely stunning graphics, with animation like you've never seen in a side-scroller. Some may bemoan the staggering amount of slowdown, but not I. This game is pure magic and what gaming is all about. If there were five of these a year, the world would be a great place indeed. In my most fevered dreams I can see this one re-inventing the 2D game and making it the rightful heir to the throne of gaming P.O.V. of choice. Of course, I live in a fantasy world, but so be it! It's so warm and comfy here...



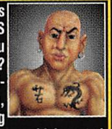
G 10 | C 9 | P 9 | M 7 | O 9 | **98**

*Metal Slug* will always remain one of the best platform shooters, in my mind. We had the machine at my old office and played it constantly. I'm glad I didn't discover it in an arcade, or I would have gone bankrupt. *Metal Slug 2* is even better, if you can believe that. This time you are fighting aliens and pseudo-Nazis for the fate of... well, you know. Dead-on playability and top-notch control more than make up for the out-of-date hardware (which actually looks really cool, in a kitsch kinda way). More fun than piñata bashing.



G 8 | C 10 | P 10 | M 6 | O 7 | **91**

After practically 2 full blown years, SNK is back! OK, lemme get this straight... IT'S NOT ANOTHER FIGHTING GAME? You guessed it! Take a game and make it better? That's what they've done! They have definitely taken advantage of their hardware, and given us the greatest game of this dying breed. New characters, new weapons, new vehicles, and practically everything about the game is top caliber! And you don't have to sit in a stinky arcade and wait in line to play it either! If you have a Neo Geo, then buy it! If you don't, then go buy one for *MS2*! And you can bet *MS2* already has my vote for action game of the year!



G 10 | C 9 | P 9 | M 7 | O 9 | **99**




**Metal Slug 2**
**Neo Geo (Import)**
**SNK**
**Platform**

# FINAL FANTASY VIII

ファイナルファンタジーVIII



We are practically done with the issueand as we literally go to press, wouldn't you know it? Square announces that they have yet another epic game on the way! And this one is just too good to be true. Brace yourself for the latest and quite possibly the best in epic RPGs. *Final Fantasy VIII* is here!!!

## Characters



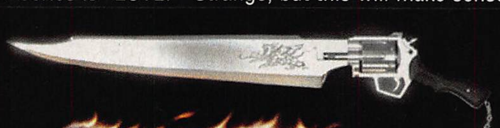

### SQUALL LEONHEART




### LAGUNA LOIRE

Two of the characters in *FFVIII* have already been announced (pictured above), but Square has yet to release the storyline involving them. They did mention, however, that Squall (left) has a scar on his face that he got from Laguna (right) which will be explained within the game. Also, these two people are from completely different parts of the *FF* world! Does this mean that you play two quests until fate brings your characters together? Hmmm... Also In the *FFVIII* logo, there is a female that is being held by Squall. Now I know that this might sound a little weird, but the theme this time in the *FF* series is "LOVE." Strange, but this will make sense to you as you read on... Waka

## Weapons



GUNBLADE

What can you do when you've created eight epic RPGs and have run out of every single name for a weapon? MAKE UP YOUR OWN! Hey, it's Square and they can do whatever they want!

Anyway, this strange weapon is actually a revolver and sword combined into one. But if you notice, there is no barrel for a bullet to pass through. So what is the trigger for you ask? Apparently if the trigger is pulled, then it increases the damage the weapon inflicts on ususpecting, unwary foes.





# FINAL FANTASY VIII

## Summon Spells



This time around, Square has gone that extra mile to bring you Leviathan (among others) in all of its glory that would make even the gods shed a tear! During the press conference in Japan, they announced that they wanted these effects to be "inspirational" and wanted us to "feel" the game.

## Battle System



In *FFVIII* Square has instituted some new and refreshing ideas. During the press conference, they showed a demo of the game, and according to some sources, they have "upgraded" the game since then. Hironobu Sakaguchi stated, "We are very likely going to change the magic system this time." So the items called materia may not even be an element in the game this time around (maybe). Also, in the video that was shown, there were commands in the battle menu that are totally new. Finally, the ATB (Active Time Battle) system is going to be "tweaked" as; they want to show a progressive evolution in this system.



The following three rows of shots are an example of some of the familiar spells in the *FF* series. I can't even tell you how sick to the stomach I felt after seeing all of these animate in their luscious splendor. Made me even forget about *Metal Gear Solid* for a minute or two! This is but a small sample of what we will be seeing in *Final Fantasy VIII*.



Blizaga (Blizzard)

Faiga (Fire)

Thundaga (Thunder)

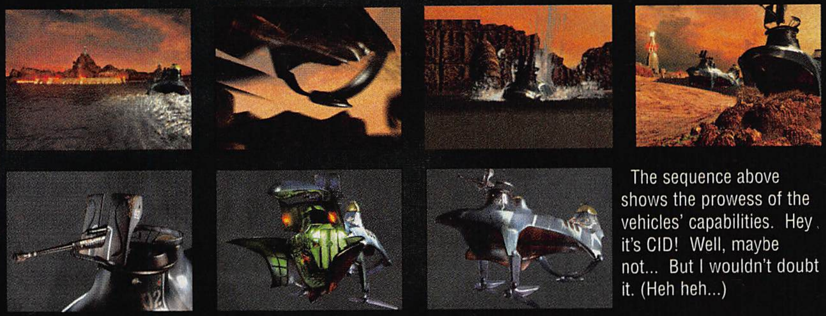


Pictured here is what appears to be a Limit-Break attack. Could this be? Square has not confirmed it yet, but it sure does look like it. We'll keep you posted!

## World

I really can't tell you how big the world in *FFVIII* is yet, but I can tell you one thing. IT IS BIG! Since both characters come from different parts of the world, the landscapes vary from weird, gothic church-looking buildings (complete with sculpted angels), to coastal beach resorts (where hovercraft-type vehicles dock), to gas stations and jungle-foliage type construction sites.

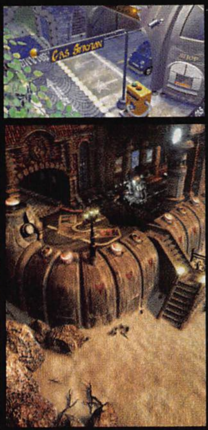
The vehicles that were shown in the demo tape were huge ships equipped with gun turrets and the ability to hover on land as well. These things are no joke! I'll update you folks on it in the issues to come, but for now, FEAST ON THESE INCREDIBLE SHOTS!



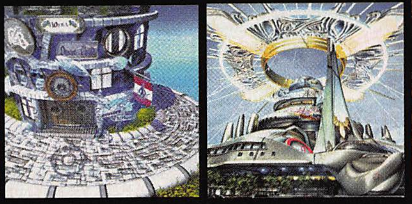
The sequence above shows the prowess of the vehicles' capabilities. Hey, it's CID! Well, maybe not... But I wouldn't doubt it. (Heh heh...)







Breathtaking landscapes! Square never sleeps!





## Other Facts and Rumors

1.) Since *FFVIII*'s theme is "love", there will be multiple heroines (like Tifa from *FFVII*) in the story to choose from. And, depending on who you pick, you might get a different ending in the game! But ask yourself this. Who is the girl in the *FFVIII* logo?



2.) Remember Shin-Ra and all of the experiments they did with *Red XIII*? Well guess what? Since there are corporations similar to Shin-Ra in *FFVIII*, expect to see characters like him again. Who knows? Maybe *Red XIII* or one of his kids will make a cameo appearance, perhaps. After all, he did live 500 years after the first ordeal... (DOH!)



3.) Square will be using the system called "Hachi Toushin," which means that characters will not "distort" and will keep their shape on the field maps (e.g., *Parasite Eve*). They want to make their games more like movies now. No problem!

4.) And finally, if you didn't know, a *FFVIII* demo will be packed-in with *Brave Fencer Musashiden* when it comes out on July 16th! So if you want to experience it soon, go out and hunt yours down now!



# "if you liked Abe's first adventure,

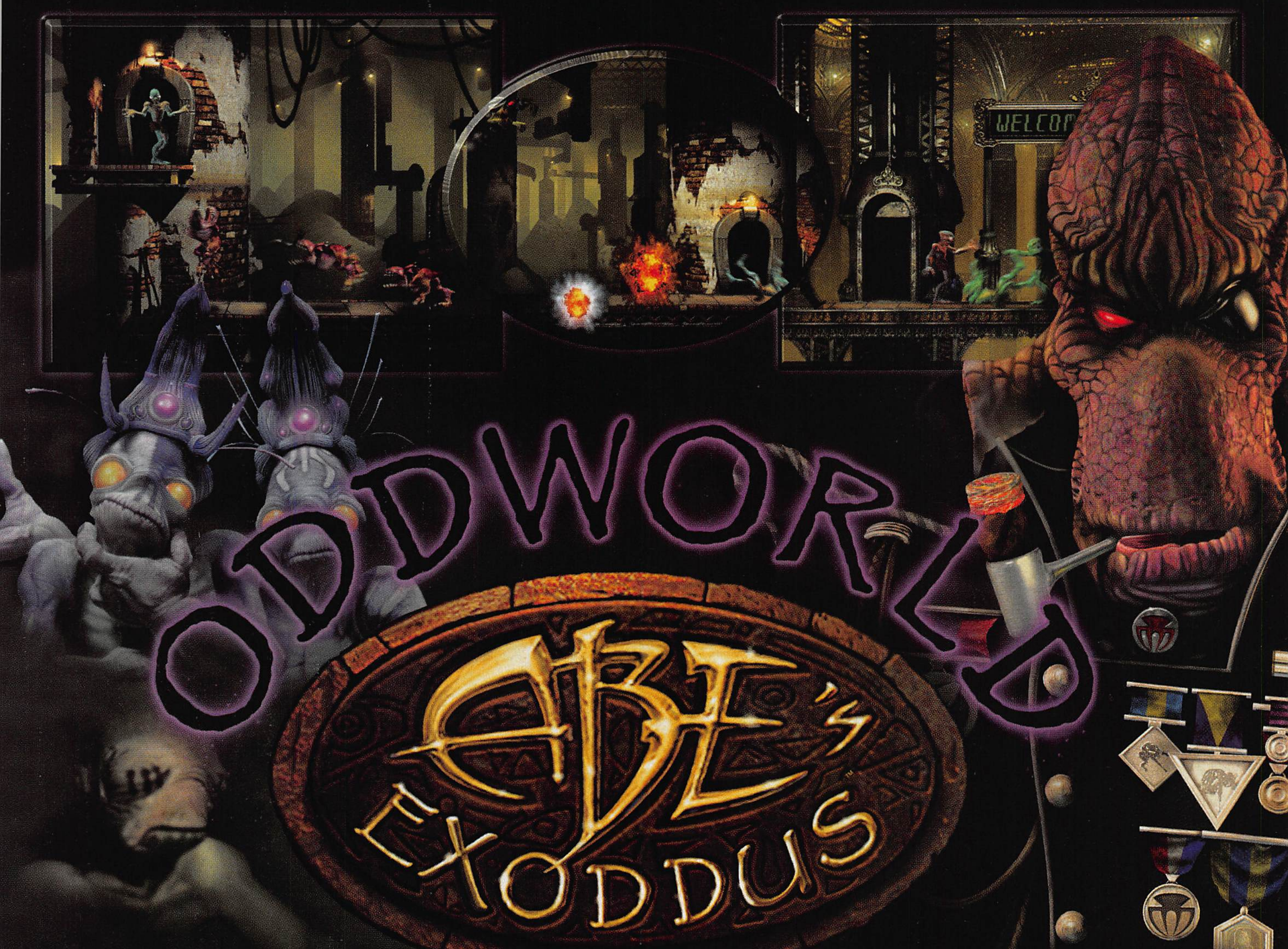
**PREVIEW**

PlayStation

| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER-ODDWORLD INHABITANTS | # OF PLAYERS - 1 - 2 |
| PUBLISHER - GT INTERACTIVE | DIFFICULTY - HARD |
| FORMAT - CD | AVAILABLE - 3RD QUARTER |



**ECM**
It's A.L.I.V.E.
... again!!!!




At the recent E3 show, after wading through the seemingly countless legions of games, peripherals, and other flotsam, I came away with the distinct impression that with few exceptions, most developers didn't seem very excited about their upcoming projects and games due for the feeding frenzy that is the 4th Quarter. You'd think, what with all the actors, PR, and marketing people running about that more than a handful would be genuinely enthusiastic and off-the-wall thrilled about something they'd poured a big part of their lives into (good lord, they could have at least made a more admirable attempt at pretending). No such luck, though, until I stumbled into Oddworld Inhabitants' shady, recessed cavern in the back of the gargantuan GT Interactive garrison.

Anyway, as I ducked my head, and followed Mr. Lorne Lanning into a quaint meeting room, the magic began. Now picture me sitting in this tiny little room, expecting yet another mindless PR-blitz about how their game is this and that, and how it deserves a cover with all the passion of Bubba and El Niño during one of their sick and twisted "Bowling with Eggo" games (poor little guy, <sigh>). Only it's that hollow, PR-style, robo-passion where you just know that the lady or gent giving you the spiel couldn't care less about the game, or the person they were speaking to; more than likely thinking about what they were going to wear at that night's party or something ("Pink or blue, pink or blue, hmmm").

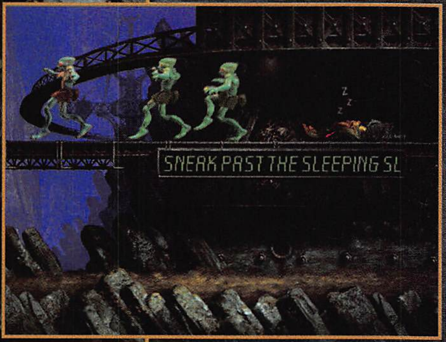
Anyhow, I digress. As the door slammed home, Mr. Lanning launched into the most animated, passion-filled presentation of the show and he meant every word. He was genuinely thrilled at the prospect that someone would take time out to peruse his product; a nice change of pace to say the least. And if you liked Abe's first adventure, you ain't seen nothing yet.

The next chapter in Abe's adventures picks up the moment the first one ends. While celebrating his victory of epic proportions over the insidious, vile, evil, rude, nasty, hungry, unfriendly, and downright smelly Glukkons (there's a lot of other choice adjectives, but this is a family magazine, <ahem>). After bringing down the nefarious and just plain twisted Rupture Farms (Paramite Pies, ick), Abe is knocked unceremoniously from his victory perch only to be confronted by the ghosts of some of his less-fortunate Mudokon compatriots. Seems that since Abe knocked R.F. out of commission, the Glukkons have lost one of the vital ingredients in SoulStorm Brew, the official (and favorite) beverage of Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus (I wonder if they've contacted MJ for an endorsement deal). And what might be that magic ingredient that gives SS Brew its rich, full flavor and nutty aroma? Why the bones of Mudokons of course! By grinding down the remnants of fallen Mudokons (and anybody that's played the first will tell you that they contributed plenty to that staggering supply) along with the tears of the

**you ain't seen nothing yet."**



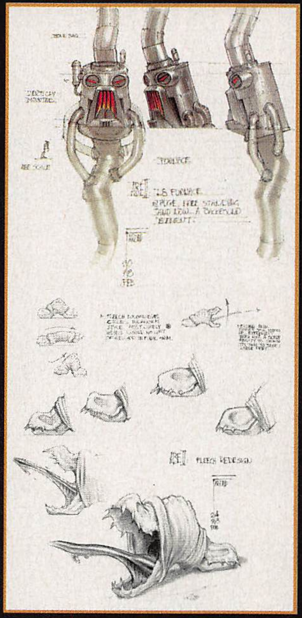






poor, extremely conductive Mudokons (that's electrocution to you and me). Which means, essentially, that Abe has all the motivation he needs to launch another crazy quest filled to the rim with exploits that make last year's model look quite dire indeed. Of course, don't let that stop those of you that haven't experienced it yet—you have haven't you!—from rushing out to get a taste of it.



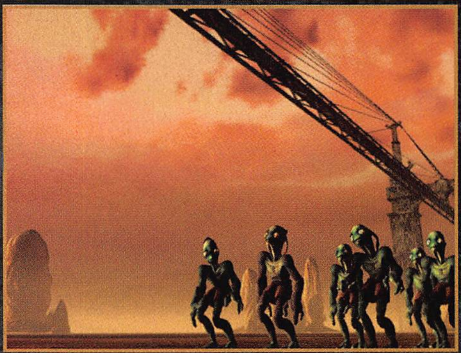
The list of improvements reads like a fresh new copy of the Sear's catalog in the hands of a giddy 6-year-old (admit it, we've all been there)—the same stuff with about a million tweaks, improvements, and pluses that will delight all the old fans (GameFan readers et al) and the countless new ones that will flock to this one like Reubus to a six-pack of Pepsi (the official beverage of Reubus).

From the graphics to the gameplay, humor, personality, and downright weirdness of *Abe's Oddysee*, everything has been overhauled and built on. Oddworld Inhabitants didn't simply take last year's game and slap a new name on it, they went through and made major improvements that any fan of *AO* will jump up and down for. Major complaints like the, how shall I say, somewhat irritating save game system has been perfected. It now allows for stopping a game at any point and retaining everything that was onscreen at that exact instant. Before, when you saved, it was at your own risk as you'd lose Mudokans, and have to repeatedly go through some of the more hairy sequences because of the broken system—not any more, though. Also, whereas in the first *Abe's*, the game wouldn't tell you when you'd reached "points of no return." Meaning that if you left certain areas of the game you weren't ever going to get back to that part of the game again; say "goodbye" to any Mudokons you missed in that area cause you ain't never gonna see em. Couple that with the wonky save mechanism, and many a PS pad died a valiant, fiery death as they struck the televisions of the nation at savage, ear-splitting velocities (think of the carnage that will be avoided now that the extra-heavy Dual Shocks are now in general circulation! <shiver>).

Ask anybody what their favorite part of the first adventure was, and likely they'll answer the possession of the insidious Sligs. Take control of one of the evil little bastards and run around like Rambo on crack, gunning down any and everything that stood in your path (I contributed pretty heavily to the production of SS Brew in the capacity of angel of death). Well, beyond possessing the simple Sligs, you can now control Scrabs, Paramites, and Glukkons. Add in Abe's ability to slap friend and foe around this time out (Abe has a mean hook) and it's time for some of the greatest comedy skits since Abbot and Costello. Not to mention the fact that each race has its own unique vocabulary for all of Abe's standard Gamespeak phrases—let the hilarity ensue.

Speaking of Gamespeak, it's now been expanded and elaborated on—and you're gonna need it! See, this time out, the Mudokons possess actual emotions. Happy, sad, manic, spite, and even depression deep enough to lead them to take their own lives. It's very important

**"Oddworld Inhabitants didn't simply take last went through and made major improvements**

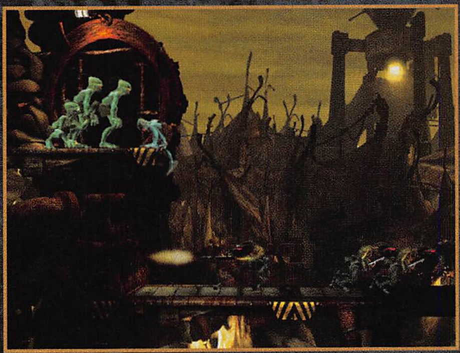












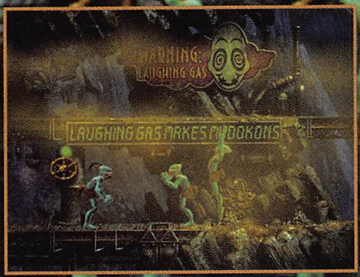
to keep your kin happy or they won't help you in solving the various puzzles scattered throughout the game. And if you let them get sad enough, by killing too many of them, they will start to kill themselves. This is comic gold (not that suicide is a funny thing in too many cases) as they'll smack themselves in the head until they dissolve away!

I've just barely scratched the surface of one of the year's best games. This will be (with Oddworld's cooperation, of course) one of the games we keep you updated on a monthly basis with. Stay tuned to GF for the latest and best info on this hot title and one of 2D's last hurrahs (the next game in the series goes 3D, folks! Argh). Cherish it while you can, I know I will. ***ECM***













**year's game and slap a new name on it, they**
**that any fan of AO will jump up and down for”**





**The Nintendo 64 needed a game like *Quest64*. A real-time RPG with a *>blech!<* cutesy little protagonist, *Quest64* is a mix of classic RPG staples and some very innovative gaming styles.**

**The story is simple and straightforward, with just enough motivation to get the ball rolling. You play a youngster with a flair for elemental magic. Having spent his life cooped up in a monastery, all he has is his dad and his cudgel (which he never puts down... hmmm). Suddenly, though, Pops is missing and you need to find him. Cast out into the cruel world by the monastery monks, you head south in search of your old man. Let the journey begin...**



# Quest 64

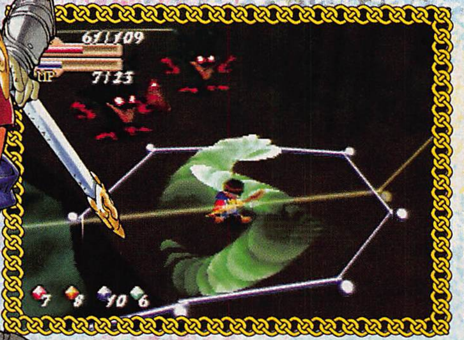


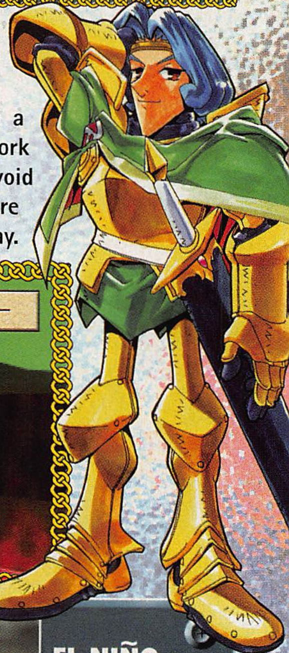
**COMBAT SYSTEM** The combat system is the most refreshing style I've seen to date, in an RPG. A turn-based system with real-time action, you'll be rewarded for skillful gameplay, on top of the powers your character has already acquired through level advancement. There are two hexagonal areas in battle that you need to worry about. The first, and biggest, is the combat area. It is in this hexagon that the skirmish takes place. At any time, you may move towards its boundaries in order to escape from the encounter. At the onset of the attack, where you are in this area changes, based on what side your assailants are attacking from.

The next hexagon is your area of movement. Each turn you are allowed to move anywhere within this sector. As you begin to recognize attack patterns and weaknesses in your enemy's offense, your positioning within this area will be very important. The right positioning is key in avoiding spell attacks.

Each monster you encounter is equipped with a different set of spells. Knowing how the spells work will allow you needed information on how to avoid them. For example, many projectile spells require you only to move left or right to get out of the way.





R REVIEW

NINTENDO 64

| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER - IMAGINEER | # OF PLAYERS - 1 |
| PUBLISHER - THQ | DIFFICULTY - MODERATE |
| FORMAT - CARTRIDGE | AVAILABLE - JUNE |



**EL NIÑO**
We're gonna make a man outta you yet, boy.







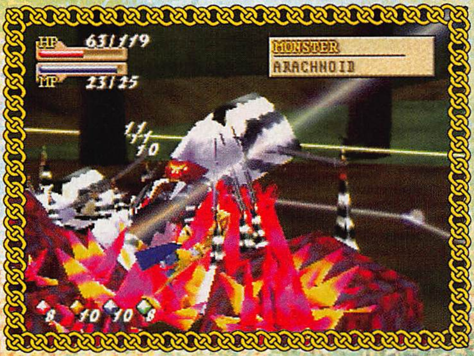



Some, however, can only be avoided if you can successfully maneuver around the back of the attacker before he gets off the incantation. As the game progresses, the spells become more powerful, and thus, more difficult to avoid.



**ELEMENTAL SPIRITS** The spell system, too, is clever. There are four types of spell: earth, air, fire and water. Each is represented by a colored crystal. As you play, you will gain crystal levels by gaining experience or finding free-floating spirit energy. Allocate the power as you see fit. Within each elemental sphere, there are sub-classes of spells that are in combination with the other three elements. You will gain knowledge of these spells as the game progresses. How strong these spells are depends on how high the power levels of those elements are. To access these spells, simply click on one of the elements and then press the C button in one of the four directions to access different spells. For example, to use the Heal spell, choose the water spirit and then press the left C button (the earth spirit). To use a stronger version of heal, hit the left C again, to access Heal 2.








**CRAZY CRITTERS** The world of Quest is populated with some of the most colorful and interesting denizens around. From giant spiders and evil orcs to man-eating plants that would make a Triffid tremble, Quest64 offers up a plethora of monsters that are anything but typical. Some creatures you encounter are truly intimidating and will definitely make you think before you engage. The wyverns gave me a scare the first time they swooped in on me... I ran away like a little girl.



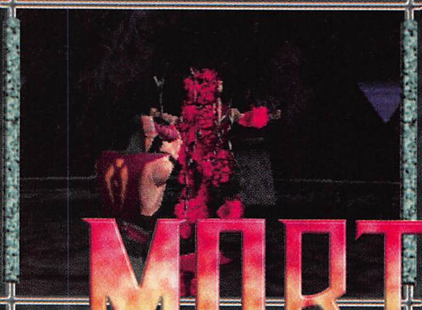



**Long ago, in a forgotten time of mystical beasts and magical incantations, comes the prodigal lord's son, master of all arcane magicks and ancient grimoires...**

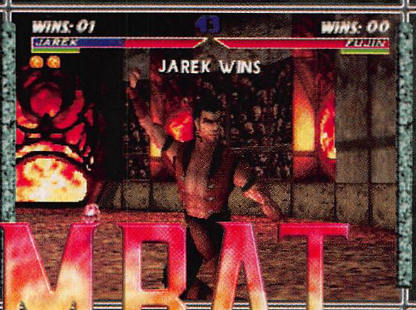
**BRIAN!(?)**



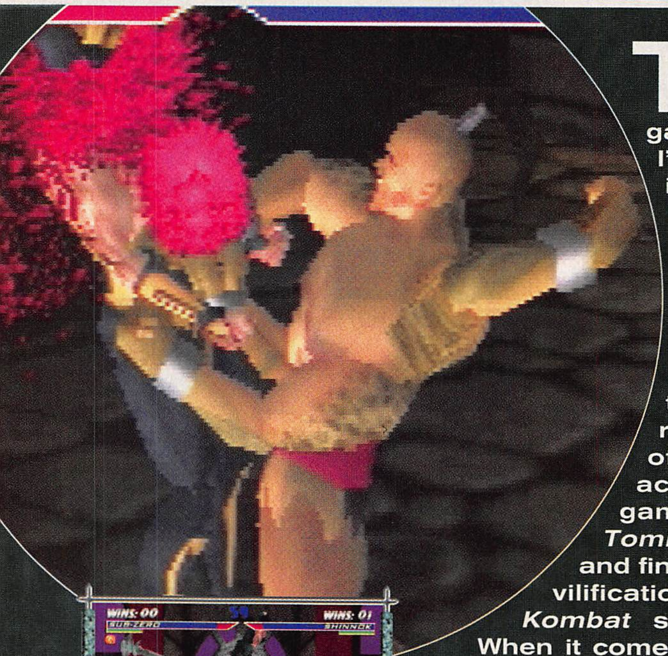
***Quest64* has all of the ingredients to make it a big seller. Undoubtedly, veteran RPG and adventure fans will scoff at its lack of complexity and juvenile approach; this is unfortunate, but understandable. My take on *Quest64* is that its simplicity is its strongest point. Without being bogged down in all of the baggage that accompanies other RPGs, *Quest64* is a kind of vacation for hard-core players. Is it as good as something like *Fallout*, *Final Fantasy* or *Grandia*? Hell no, but it's a great change of pace for those on the verge of burn-out. The perfect hors d'oeuvre while you wait for your main course of *Zelda64*. *EN***








# MORTAL 4 KOMBAT








There are a number of things about the US gaming scene that I've grown increasingly tired of over the last couple of years. A serious dearth of shooters on any domestic platform (somebody please explain that to me); the rampant explosion of 3rd-person action/ adventure games (*Mario 64*, *Tomb Raider*, et al); and finally, the continued vilification of the *Mortal Kombat* series of games. When it comes right down to it, are they really *that* bad? Sure, Midway never should have gotten into the whole *MK Mythologies* thing, but are the fighters really as horrid as most of the press and so-called 'hard-core' gamers say? In a word: NO. Sure, *MK3* and *UMK* had issues, but *MK2* was one of the finest fighters of all time, and even the original, for a time, was a fun diversion. Unfortunately, due to its continued degradation at the hands of everybody 'in the know,' even the arcade *Mortal Kombat 4* failed to generate any real excitement–even I had written it off without giving it a chance. Turns out, now that I've played the N64 rev to death, I was being more than just a little short-sighted, and so, probably, were you.

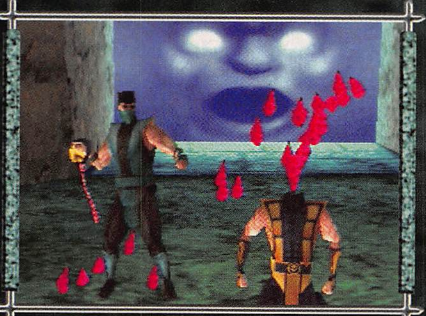
Sure, sure, I can hear the cries of anger and rage: "Sell out!" "Midway lover!" "Saturn biased (oh wait, wrong article)!" etc. If that's the way you want to look at it... fine, you can stay in your dank, dark pit, and rail on *Mortal Kombat* and how all its offspring are devil spawn. Me, I'm gonna go play the hottest fighter to hit the N64 yet (and yes, I realize it isn't exactly a tough fight... but still).

For those of you that have played the arcade version (powered by their proprietary Zeus hardware), this is a near-exact port. The stunning fact is that Eurocom seems to have managed to get just about every last detail from the coin-op into the tight confines of a mere 128-Meg cart. The voice from the intro, endings, etc., is all there. The motion captures are all there. All the moves, fatalities, and characters are there. Everything from the latest arcade revision, version 3.0, is in here.

For those of you that are new to the realm of *MK* (is there such a person?), this is a 3D fighting game replete with buckets of blood, and strikingly violent deaths abound at the conclusion of each match. Gameplay is accomplished with two punch buttons, two kick buttons, a block button, and a run button. Through skillful manipulation of the joystick in conjunction with the buttons, one can elicit 'combos.' These



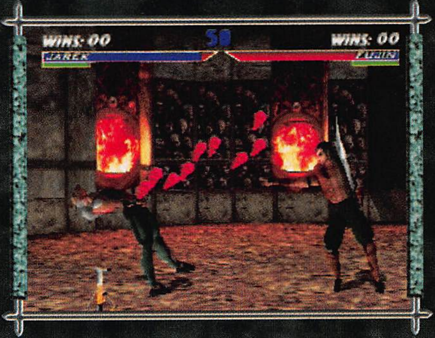














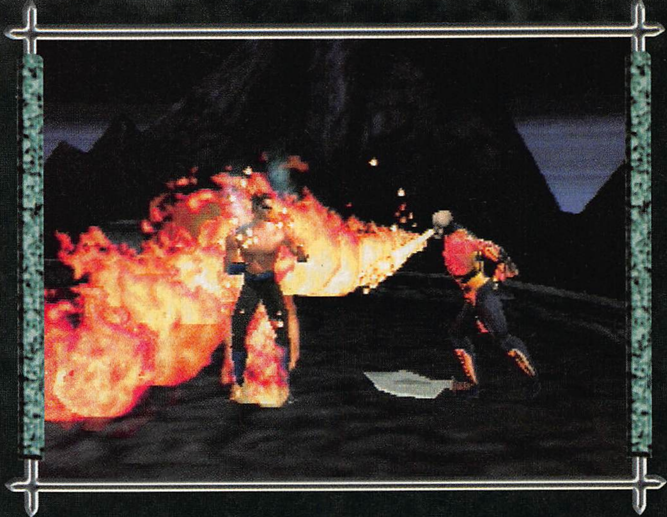
allow un-blockable strings of hits in succession and allow the quick and efficient destruction of any number of foes foolish enough to challenge the talented player (Eggo is a good example of cannon fodder for these purposes).

Of course, the fatalities are in there, and are probably the most twisted bunch yet. Of special interest are Quan Chi's 'beat 'em to death with their own leg' fatality (methinks he eats a little too much sugar), and Liu Kang's 'dragon morphing, eat 'em alive' fatality. If it's blood you want, you've come to the right place.

Gameplay is much the same as the other *MK*'s with one notable exception: This one plays a hell of a lot like the venerable *MK2* and that makes all the difference in the world to me. The fact that the combos are actually 'real' and require more than the standard button-pounding that the chain-combo-heavy *MK3* required. Not that *MK4* doesn't feature chains, it's just that at the same time there are also combos like Scorpion's classic punch-teleport-punch-spear-uppercut combo.

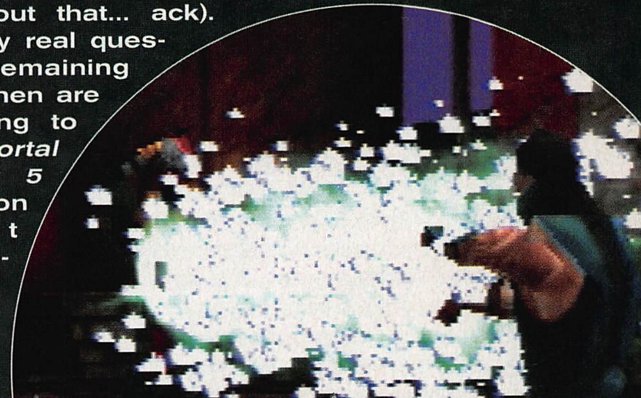



And as is typical of the *MK* series of games, it features the best sound effects of any arcade game. Hell, if you stand too near a 100-watt subwoofer while executing uppercuts repeatedly you can rupture internal organs and cause smaller animals (chihuahuas, rabbits, Waka...) instant death. Pretty cool if you ask me.



Anyway, beyond the obvious, *MK4* proves that there is yet life (well, maybe death) in the continuing *Mortal Kombat* saga (though the second film probably has something to say about that... ack). The only real question remaining now: When are we going to see *Mortal Kombat 5* and on what hardware?

*ECM*












P PREVIEW

NINTENDO64

DEVELOPER - EUROCOM
PUBLISHER - MIDWAY
FORMAT - CARTRIDGE
# OF PLAYERS - 1-2
DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
AVAILABLE - NOW



**ECM**
Yes, I like it...

# CHOPPER ATTACK

"...pulling looping turns while gunning down moving targets..."

ARGH! This game is frustrating. Call it an extended learning curve... if it's not one thing, it's another: control issues, poor weapons, slow speed, cross-eyed crosshairs, or ridiculous enemy difficulty. Now don't get me wrong. These are not problems with the game, but more like surmountable obstacles which you have to figure out how to overcome. When the last hurdle is passed, then you'll finally be able to enjoy *Chopper Attack*.

Let's start with control... The "C" buttons are used to accelerate, back up, and strafe; at the same time, analog skills are a must. Adeptly using both these controls simultaneously is like patting your head and rubbing your stomach at the same time. After some initial discomfort, it will "click" and you'll be pulling looping turns while gunning down moving targets in glee.

But while the control has been cleaned up considerably from *Wild Choppers, CA* still suffers from other problems. The crosshairs are inaccurate, so players are forced to watch for machine gun dust clouds whenever they fire. Special weapons, which must be purchased before every mission, are also a bit questionable. Most of the lock-on missiles are overpriced and easily avoidable by enemies, even if you've established a lock-on. Fortunately, there is one special weapon which fires 10 smaller missiles which are effective and cheap.

On a side note, *Chopper Attack* isn't a helicopter sim. You have no control over elevation—you're kept at a constant height from the ground—which prevents you from crashing into the ground, but which may be upsetting to sim-heads.

The game is a pleasant ride through the first three levels, as you take out simple ground-based targets and then an escort mission. But your skills had better be honed by the fourth level, because it gets incredibly hard. Enemies pummel you from all sides constantly: 'copters, tanks, soldiers, and even a Rambo-esque guy who grabs onto the tail of your helicopter to throw off the copter's balance. The finer aspects of this game are a lot of fun, such as the tail-grabbing Rambo guy, seeing soldiers fly up in the air with arms flailing when you shoot them, or taking on a Stealth Bomber.

The graphics look good, though there is an unhealthy amount of fog on some levels. The instruments, a constant drum beat and electric guitar riffs, don't sound bad; but the overall music composition when it's all thrown together is aggravating. And, you can't just turn the volume down, because you need to listen for the sound of your machine guns hitting their target.

To sum it up, *Chopper Attack* is an enjoyable, arcade-like experience. But getting "into it" is like an older sister trying to cram her foot into Cinderella's glass slipper. "It fits, trust me... just gimme a second... ⋮···grunt···⋮... ugh... ⋮···puff···⋮." *E*

















**REVIEW**

NINTENDO 64

| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER - SETA | # OF PLAYERS - 1 |
| PUBLISHER - MIDWAY | DIFFICULTY - HARD |
| FORMAT - CARTRIDGE | AVAILABLE - NOW |




**EGGO**
"Murdoch, I'm coming for you..."











# BIO FREAKS




The day *Time Killers* came into the local pizzeria, I have to admit that I played it and enjoyed it till the *Street Fighter 2* machine was fixed. Yes, I hear your cries of "Son of the Devil" and I'm sure the chronic burning of the eyes will certainly affect those hard-core gamers reading this. But it was fun lopping off the heads of your opponents in the midst of battle, or even the dark joy one receives by cutting off the arms of an opponent thereby prolonging the enemy's sorry life before you end it in a blood-gurgling slice. Yes, gore has been featured in many fighting games and it's no surprise that the N64's latest fighter *BioFreaks* does the same. How does *BioFreaks* fare in the gameplay dept.? Let's see...

Eight fighters comprise the line-up to choose from, ranging from G. I. Jane-like Sabotage to a futuristic version of Clive Barker's cenobites with the aptly named Zipperhead. All characters have a main missile weapon and thrusters enabling attacks from higher ground, which nearly all battle arenas feature. Since the game allows full 3D movement, characters can sidestep as well. As the battle progresses, an occasional arm or two might get sliced, blown, or torn apart, so defense is an essential part of the game. To guard oneself from the many projectiles in the game, all characters have limited shield energy which envelopes the fighter with a silver or gold coating. Graphically, the game isn't bad but it ain't great, as I have mixed feelings on some of the wackier character designs. Explosions, fire, and other effects are here and done pretty well, but won't leave you quaking in awe. The backgrounds feature great detail and most are quite unique; many contain a 'level fatality' (e.g. "The Mangler").

I have mixed feelings about the playability as many of the special moves are just OK. A low-level combination system, requiring bashing the proper buttons in sequence, is also used. My main gripe is not with the control nor the play, but the pad itself. The N64 controller isn't made for this type of fighting game as a number of moves require hitting two or three buttons at the same time. Another region of unpredictability is the combat itself: Unbalanced gameplay occurs when countering your opponent after blocking, especially while deploying the shield. You never know if you'll be able to hit your opponent after blocking their attack, or if they can still attack.

*BioFreaks* probably wasn't tailored to the hard-core fighting game enthusiast, but the more casual gamer. If that's the case, then this game does the trick. However, if you're looking for a precision fighter that requires some degree of skill and not random button-drumming, look elsewhere. Otherwise, you may garner a fair bit of enjoyment from this title, especially if you're into the blood and gore aspect. *D*



















R REVIEW

NINTENDO 64

DEVELOPER - MIDWAY
PUBLISHER - MIDWAY
FORMAT - CARTRIDGE

# OF PLAYERS - 1-2
DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
AVAILABLE - NOW



**DANGO**
WOW! A 3D fighter with gore!! What a novel concept!!!









# Azure Dreams

**O**ne of the most original RPGs to come along in years, *Azure Dreams* caps off a trifecta of excellent role-playing titles (*Suikoden* and *Vandal Hearts*) from Konami.

More than anything else, it is the approach that the developers took that makes *Azure Dreams* such a fresh game. The adventure takes place in a single area: The Monster Tower. Therein lies 99 levels filled with mystical beasts and wondrous, magical items. From the town below, you can just barely make out something at the top... what is it?

At the base of the tower is a small town with little money. It is where you grew up—and probably where you will die. Your father, who is now dead, was the best monster tamer in the town—but little is expected of you. Your coming of age leaves you with a choice in what path you would like to take in life. You choose to follow in your father's footsteps.

Some may cringe at the idea of an RPG taking place in only one area, but don't fret. The dynamics of this game offer a surprising variety in options and adventures. Not only will you get to grow as a tamer, but you will raise familiars, complete tasks for townspeople, and slowly rebuild your suffering hamlet with the money you earn from your exploits. Much awaits those who play *Azure Dreams.*

This game is a major winner. The graphics and sound could be better, but the gameplay RPG elements are top-notch. Better than both *Suikoden* and *Vandal Hearts*, *Azure Dreams* is a clever and refreshing spin on the RPG genre.










**RULES OF THE TOWER:**
1. The levels of the tower change every time you enter, so the order is never the same.
2. Once you enter, you cannot leave, unless you come across a magic item that will allow you to exit.
3. Every time you return, you default back to level one, but your familiar retains his powers.
4. You can only take five items with you into the tower.

The inclusion of a strict set of Tower rules are what make *Azure Dreams* the enjoyable challenge that it is. You are forced to generate your own strategies on how to work within the Tower's parameters. You also have to watch out not to get killed (knocked out). If this happens, you are transported back to your home, lose all of your money and equipment and start from square one. This can make life extremely difficult, so play it smart. Also, you can never turn off the game mid-play, or the same fate will befall you. *Azure Dreams* does not forgive the sloppy player.












### THE FAMILIARS

This is the coolest aspect of *Azure Dreams*—and the part that resembles *Monster Rancher*. You start out with one familiar: a kewne dragon. He will be your anchor, but you are going to need many other species to complete the game. In the Tower, you will come across unhatched eggs. Bring these back to your house and incubate them. The monsters that hatch can now travel with you to the Tower. At first, many of the critters are weak and bad substitutes for your kewne. Once you collect another collar, though, and can have two familiars at once... that is when things get interesting. Now you have the option of fusing them into a stronger breed. When you fues two familiars, you always get a stronger strain. Whether it is a fire, air or water type depends on what classification the strongest parent is. To change the familiar's elemental class, you can feed them special nuts, that you can find in the tower.

Also very important is the ability to change the AI of the familiar. You can customize what kind of offensive stance he'll take (all-out attack, magic, stand-by, etc...) and where he is positioned, whether it be in front, back, or next to you. This kind of strategy will become instrumental in your continued success in *Azure Dreams*.





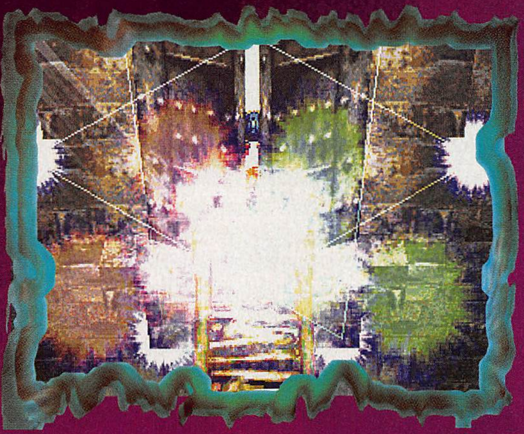


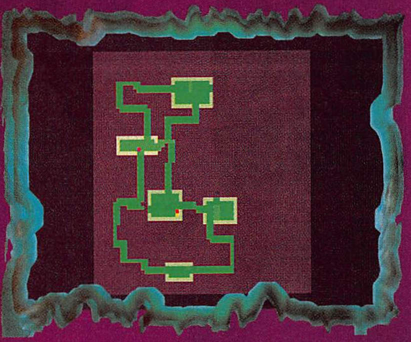


### THE TOWN

Your town is essentially a slum. It will be up to you to make things right. As you earn money in the Tower, you can opt to upgrade and build new housing, entertainment facilities, and churches. Start by remodeling your house (it will allow you to hold more familiars and items) and then start fixing the rest of the town. Each time you build or fix something, it will open up more options, items and help your town's status (there is a local upper-class family that are total snobs). Watching your town grow and prosper becomes quite enjoyable and fulfilling. ***EN***



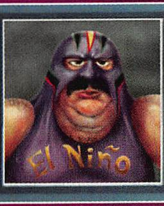


**MAP:**
At any time, you can hold down the SELECT button, to call up the level map. This will keep you from getting lost.

**REVIEW**

PlayStation

| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER - KONAMI | # OF PLAYERS - 1 |
| PUBLISHER - KONAMI | DIFFICULTY - HARD |
| FORMAT - CD | AVAILABLE - NOW |



**EL NIÑO**
Champagne wishes and Azure dreams.
















# STREAK









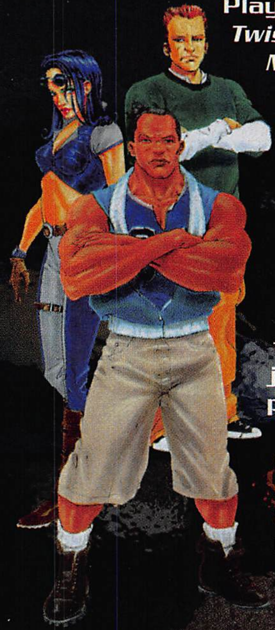




I can already see it: a flood of hoverboard games are coming. If you look at the genealogy of this genre, the roots go back to Sony's *Xtreme Games.* That branched off into snowboarding titles like *CoolBoarders, Snowboard Kids* and *1080.* The next logical step was the futuristic snowboarding game—the hoverdeck.

First shown to us in *Back To the Future 2* (and an absolutely nightmarish SNES game—ack), the hoverdeck concept has spawned three titles that will be showing, up late this fall: this puppy, Psygnosis' *Psybadek, and Slip Groove* by Shaba.

Developed by Singletrac, the team behind such classic PlayStation titles as *Twisted Metal, Jet Moto* and *Warhawk, Streak* is a racing game set in present time, with entries competing in a series of secret races using a secret technology: GEM. What exactly is GEM tech? I guess you'll just have to compete... and win.



The game will support two-player split screen as well as a four-player link scenario. While this is where the game truly shines, it looks as though the one player mode, with its unfolding story will likewise be entertaining.

At this point, *Streak* has some work left to be done. While the courses are interesting and challenging, it can be hard to see where you are going and some of the layout needs to be changed. Also, there are collision detection problems as well as physics issues. The game is far from done, though, so don't fret. Singletrac has an excellent track record and they are very devoted to this title.

One of the cooler features in *Streak* is its stunt system. There are no preset maneuvers; every stunt is free-formed with the d-pad. As long as you have the speed and the air, you are the artist and the racer is the extension of your creativity. The more impressive the move, the more points you earn (duh).

There are 10 racers, each with a different set of attributes resulting in a unique racing style. Other features included are about a dozen tracks, a Shadow Mode, and the nifty gem streaks which follow the racer like a comet's tail.

If the aforementioned problems are addressed, *Streak* should be quite a hit. It would be nice if Singletrac continues its solid winning *streak* (aren't I clever?). *EN*

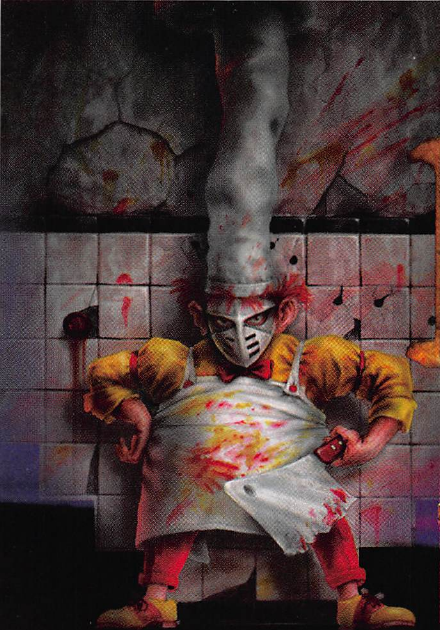



**PREVIEW** PlayStation

DEVELOPER - SINGLETRAC
PUBLISHER - GTI
FORMAT - CD
# OF PLAYERS - 1-4
DIFFICULTY - HARD
AVAILABLE - 3RD QUARTER



**EL NIÑO**
Out of left field, naked as a jaybird...



# ROGUE TRIP™







So what was Max doing with his time after disposing of the evil Lord Humungous and battling Ms. Turner in the Thunderdome? Apparently, he became a tour guide.

The game is **Rogue Trip** and the developers are SingleTrac. This warrior's wasteland is easily summed up as the unofficial sequel to **Twisted Metal 2**. Sony now owns the rights to the name (and they are making their own version. After **Blasto**, though, I'm not too confident...) so **Rogue Trip** it is. Hey, at least they got to keep the game engine. Score one for the little guys!

The story is this: In the future, one man controls all of the world's vacation spots. He charges hefty prices, making it impossible for Joe Blow to enjoy them. Mercenary tour guides offer the trip to tourists for a more reasonable price. Only problem is, they are unwanted guests and end up getting shot at. **Rogue Trip**, using an augmented **TM2** engine, will offer improvements in all areas. There will be twelve selectable vehicles and three bosses. It will be possible to unlock those bosses for battle; it's about time... Also, nine battlegrounds will be available, plus three secret levels. All of the areas are much larger than those seen in previous **TMs** and contain many more interactive elements (check out Shamu in the Southern Cal theme park).



One element that the **TMs** lacked was game depth. **Rogue Trip** has addressed this problem and the solution was the addition of level objectives. The tourists that you are toting around (there are five in all) must be delivered to photo op sites. Get them there and earn big bucks. Watch out, though, because they will bail out on you if you sustain too much damage; and don't let the competition swoop your fares... With the money you earn, you can now upgrade your weapons or replenish your armor.



Many gamers will enjoy the adult humor and edgy content of **Rogue Trip**. Its tongue-in-cheek delivery and over-the top action make this one hell of an enjoyable ride. The question remains though, is it good enough to stand up to **Vigilante 8**? Only next issue will tell. ***EN***









P PREVIEW

PlayStation

| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER - SINGLETRAC | # OF PLAYERS - 1-4 |
| PUBLISHER - GTI | DIFFICULTY - MEDIUM |
| FORMAT - CD | AVAILABLE - 3RD QUARTER |



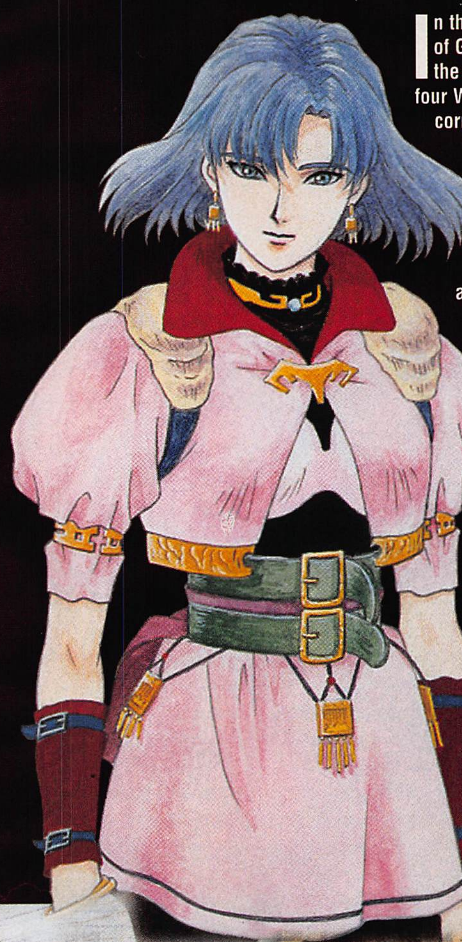
**EL NIÑO**
It's all about the fat tourist...

In the past, a war between the Imperials (Boo! Hiss!) and the Spirit Army (Applause) literally tore the planet of Granstream apart. After the Imperials fired a forbidden weapon, it melted the ice caps and split the world into four continents. Before the continents sank into the newly-formed raging ocean, four Wise Men wove their magic into four magic Orbs (each representing a different element and corresponding to a continent). These Orbs raised the continents from certain destruction and were powered by a sacred song called a lifting verse.

Back in the present, you're Eon, a strapping, young hero-to-be, dragged into the role of saving the world when your mentor Valos is killed. He was trying to prevent the continents from falling back into the ocean, because the Orbs are losing their power. Armed with only his memory and a magical scepter, you're given the daunting task of recharging each of the Orbs by finding and reciting the lifting verse for each one.

My first impressions of *Granstream Saga* were that it was no Saga at all. Only four continents? That's about four dungeons; I'll be able to breeze through it in a day or two, right? Uh... no. Even though there's only one dungeon per continent, each is large and has tough puzzles barring your passage. When I say tough, I'm talking permanent hair loss. Warning! *GS's* puzzles may be hazardous to the health of your PlayStation controller or pets.

Graphically, *Granstream* is a treat. Gouraud-shaded polygon characters move at a constant 60 fps through beautiful 3D texture-mapped worlds (yes, there's 90-degree rotating camera angles). The decision to use gouraud shading, however, leads to large polygon characters with no facial features. There's slight shading where eyes would be at times, but to put it bluntly... "<ahem!> THESE PEOPLE HAVE NO FACES!" No eyes, nose, mouth... nothing. Call it artsy, call it *GS*'s unique style—I call it a flaw. This is somewhat remedied by large hand-drawn character portraits which pop up randomly in

















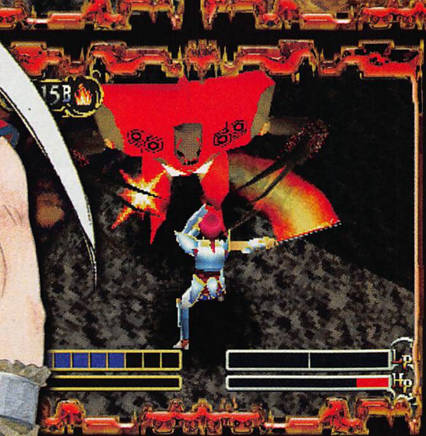
# The Granstream Saga

グランストリーム伝紀 ™















dialogue. These portraits serve to convey different emotions in conversation, but they don't come up as often as they should.

Speaking of dialogue, there's a lot of it in this game. *Saga* is incredibly story-driven. Maybe it's the jaded gamer/movie guy speaking out here, but the plot of *GS* is cliched to the point that it's funny. Save the world by charging the four elemental Orbs (earth, wind, water, and fire) in a mission to prevent the evil Imperials from ruling the planet. To its credit, though, the story is fleshed out in full detail, and characters are well developed. You'll only control Eon in the game ("I work alone..."), but you have allies: Korky, a bird who prefers the term "spirit beast" and general wise-cracking sidekick (his jokes are even worse than Reubus'. Ai ya!); Arcia, the naive, "Sumimasen"-speaking, "Save Me," amazingly-single female; and Laramee, an overly brash, self-centered, rebellious beeotch to the 10th power. There's a running storyline of the Imperials brainwashing key members of government mixed in for good measure too.

*Granstream Saga* is the first PlayStation RPG with true real-time combat. When a battle begins, you're confined to an enclosed area and have full control of your character at all times. Juke, jive, sidestep, block, attack, retreat, etc. Dodge enemy attacks while picking spots for your own assaults. This combat system works incredibly well for the game, and here's why: The enemy AI is wonderfully varied. If all the enemies reacted the same, then it would be a matter of time before you found the one attack pattern to overcome all opponents (e.g., the infamous *Double Dragon* elbow).

Amazingly, every enemy has different strengths and weaknesses which must be exploited. Some are incredibly agile and hard to hit while others are lumbering behemoths which can take a beating. Different strategies will be required every time you face a different dungeon monster; some you'll want to bum-rush with nonstop attacks, others you'll be forced into cat-and-mouse block/attack games. Herein lies a fault of the game: Since the number of dungeons is limited (four), it would be nice to have more than two or three different monsters inhabiting each dungeon... unfortunately, you don't. Though the enemy character design is limited, their differing attack styles make up for it.

Also, Eon can cast magic spells in battle, and there's hidden d-pad techniques which lead to special moves in battle. But most of your attacks will be physical slashing since Magic Points are hard to come by. The majority of special techniques and spells don't surface till the second half of the game anyways.

Any blemishes that *Granstream* has are more than made up for by the music. It's been a while since a game has come by with music which grabs you by the shoulders and shakes you like a Dual Shock. But the *Granstream* soundtrack is a must buy for game music fiends and members of the 'Doshi clan. Every continent's town and dungeon feature soothing PCM tunes which pour forth from your PlayStation with gentle ease, perfect for setting the mood of this saga.

Overall, the characters and plot of this RPG are corny and reminiscent of a B-movie, which may not sit well with some of you. But I'm a fan of B-movies, and if you don't take it too seriously, *Granstream's* story will provide you with at least 30 hours of happy gaming. Toss in melodic tunes, intricate story, and cool graphics, and THQ has a sure winner. At last! I'm done and can get back to continuing the *Saga*. *E*

**"Warning! Granstream Saga's puzzles may be hazardous to the health of your PlayStation controller or nearby pets."**

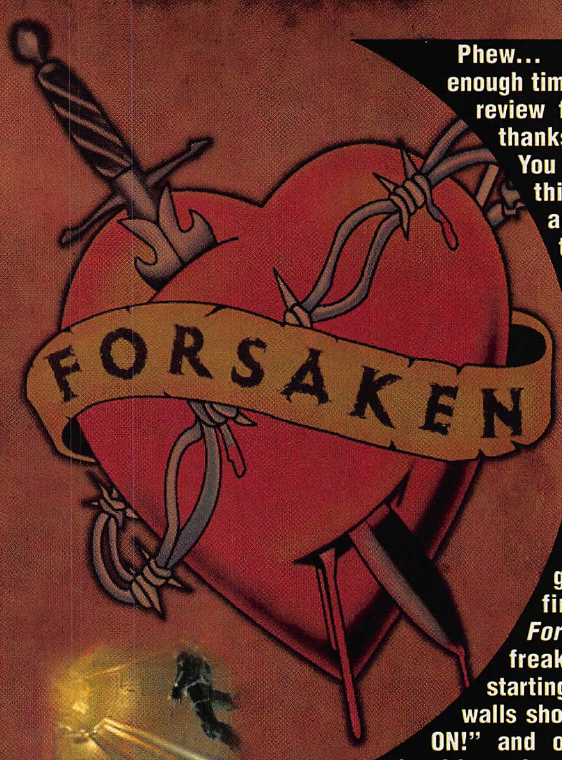
**R REVIEW**

PlayStation

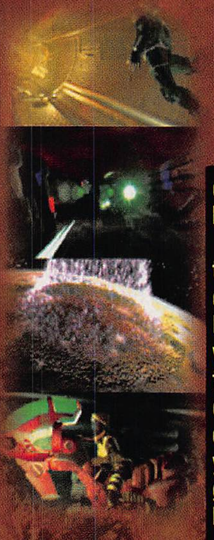
| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER - SCEI | # OF PLAYERS - 1 |
| PUBLISHER - THQ | DIFFICULTY - MODERATE |
| FORMAT - CD | AVAILABLE - NOW |



**EGGO**
A *Saga* RPG I like!




Phew... barely have enough time to write my review for *Forsaken*, thanks to Eggo. You see, Eggo has this inborn allergic reaction to 3D corridor games, symptoms of which include: migraine headaches, nausea, and blackouts. With one quick glance at our final copy of *Forsaken*, he freaked out and starting running into walls shouting: "FIGHT ON!" and other phrases that I knew he wouldn't utter under normal conditions. So after committing him to the local asylum I'm back with the first official review!

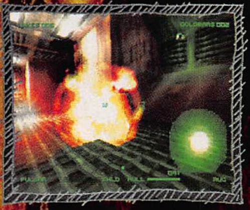


Much like the 3D corridor hit *Descent*, the user has complete control of their vehicle in a free-floating 3D environment; this leads to a very dizzying experience, one where it takes some time acclimating to the control. With 16 playable characters to choose from, each with their own attributes in speed, handling, shield and size, you'll find at least one that'll fit like a glove. Multiple weapons are allowed, most having spectacular explosive results when used properly. And this isn't your "I'm sitting here waiting for you in one place" enemy AI. We're talking about dodging and weaving between your shots, hiding behind structures, attacking in groups, and even ramming. While the AI gets annoyingly difficult at times (especially when there's six or more enemies on the screen all gunning for ya), it's a welcome challenge, and as your skill increases you'll be glad that they move with such cunning.

But if it's graphics that you're wondering about, you needn't fret... *Forsaken* runs at a seamless 60 frames per second with absolutely, positively, no polygon problems at all. Fellow gamers, we're talking about smooth, silky movement that will take your breath away. Not since *Wipeout XL* have I seen graphics run so smoothly, with awesome lighting effects that will give you goose pimples on your goose pimples. The sonic assault is incredible, with great laser scorching sounds and background effects like the cavernous echoes of machinery, adding an eerie mood to the game. While I'm not super keen on the techno music soundtrack, it meshes well with the fast paced shooting frenzy.

Sadly, only two players can hunt each other down, though the game is analog (but not Dual Shock) compatible, which elevates the controls to a higher level. I have nothing but lavish praise for Probe and highly recommend this title to anyone who has the cast-iron stomach for it. If you're a 3D corridor fan and own a PlayStation, this is the game you've been waiting for. Oh, and don't worry about Eggo... I left him a Saturn and a copy of *Doom*—he's never coming back (cue demoniacal laughter)... ***D***











# 60 fps of corridor perfection










R REVIEW

PlayStation

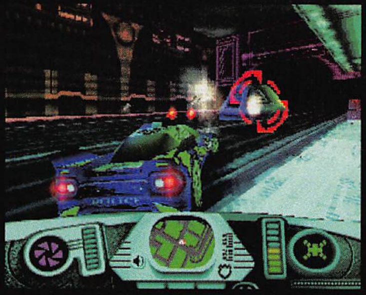
DEVELOPER - PROBE
PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM
FORMAT - CD

# OF PLAYERS 1-2
DIFFICULTY - HARD
AVAILABLE - NOW



**DANGOHEAD**
Revel in 3D corridor vertigo, or convulse in its mind-twisting madness.









# CRIME KILLER

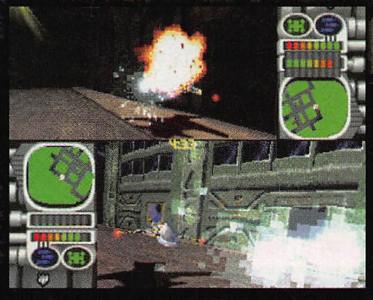


<Bleeech> Sorry, I was just showing ECM what I had for lunch after an extensive play session with *Crime Killer*. Now there's nothing wrong with the game... it's just me and my aversion to 3D games that move fast. And *Crime Killer* moves very fast—we're talkin' 60 fps fast. In fact, it runs on an engine as impressive as Acclaim's *Forsaken* (a must see for all PlayStation owners who don't need Dramamine to play 3D games).



Quite a few things have changed from this alpha version and the last ROM we saw. The package is looking more like a finished game now, with a CG intro, full mission briefings, packaged powerups in the streets (time to earn 'em), a dispatch attendant back at HQ who keeps you posted on where the hot spots of activity are while you're driving, and a techno thumping background tune to drive to.

The lengthy CG intro develops the story of Agent 88. As a child he saw his father (a cop) die in the line of duty stopping a bank robbery. Now, he's grown up, joined the Police Force, and is given badge number 88. Times are bad for the residents of the future. Crime runs rampant in the streets, and the police are hopelessly outmatched. But recently, a mysterious company named Uriel has funded the local law enforcement with new weapons and vehicles. The timing is perfect as you get behind the wheel of your state of the art death-dealing Enforcer...



On to the sounds and music... which are still being refined (e.g., the sound of an explosion here will shatter windows, but an explosion there wouldn't wake Bubba from his afternoon nap). Provided all the sounds are amped up to par, *CK* should rock in the aural department.

Multi-player action is still incomplete thus far. There's two game options here: Deathmatch (battle one-on-one) or Holotag (the tags are there, but we're not able to pick them up yet). Two players can drive around gunning each other down, but it takes forever to frag a friend (some armor tweaking needed). Though it isn't running at 60 fps, the split screen slaying still runs as smooth as any game on the PlayStation (if not better).

If the gameplay for this title is as impressive as the rest of the package, Interplay will have a surefire classic on their hands. *E*

**UPDATE**

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - PIXELOGIC

PUBLISHER - INTERPLAY

FORMAT - CD

# OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - MODERATE

AVAILABLE - 3RD QUARTER



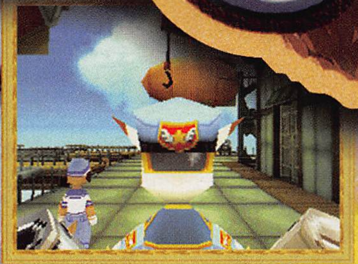

**EGGO**
"I want to learn the ways of the Force, like my father before me..."



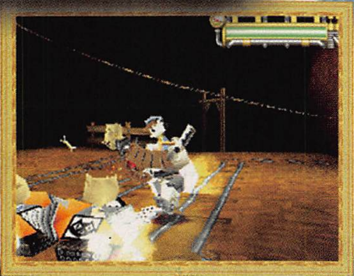
アナログコントローラ (SCPH 1200) DUAL SHOCK™ 対応

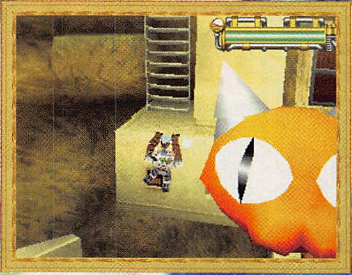
# TAIL CONCERTO



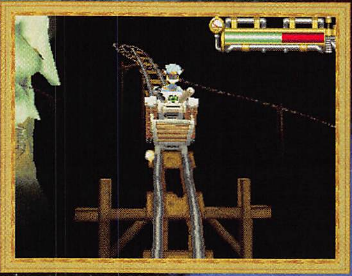












Bandai's latest, *Tail Concerto*, is a 3D adventure which takes place in a world populated by cats and dogs. You control Waffle, a dog, who travels by steering a mechanical suit which walks, runs, shoots, and scoops up evil kitties at the flick of a switch. The version we have is in Japanese, and is based on the recently released import rev. Bandai is looking seriously at porting this one over to the US, so let's delve a little deeper, shall we...

The graphics of *TC* are reminiscent of *MegaMan Neo/RockMan Dash/MegaMan Legends*, (the game with the interchangeable name components), which has yet to see the light of day on these shores. The engine is similar, especially the open air towns. Each town is populated by cats and dogs of differing status; there's royalty, servants, nobles, and the average laycat.

*Tail Concerto* doesn't fit into any specific genre. Exploring towns and talking to animals to advance the story is like a standard RPG, but the combat is real-time and occurs as you walk around with no loading/battle screen... somewhat (and don't quote me here) like a *Zelda* in a 3D world. There are platform elements of jumping, hanging, and shimmying. And like *Ghost in the Shell*, the game incorporates cut scenes of animation between gameplay. The animation is very cutesy and aims to please a younger audience. Your goal is pretty simple as well—bagging evil felines by snatching them up and throwing them into your backpack.



Running around/steering your mech is done with an log control (yes!). And the camera angle is usually set behind your character, so slight direction changes will shift the camera; the analog is perfect for this. Another plus for *Tail* is it's Dual Shock compatible. Riding in a mine cart or taking an elevator to the top of a building is made more realistic by a slight shaking rumble or a violent rip-from-your-grasp jolt depending on the intensity of the ride.

We'll be back later with a full-blown review of the American version when it receives a proper translation. *E*

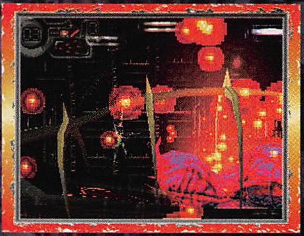
**P PREVIEW** | PlayStation

| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER - BANDAI | # OF PLAYERS - 1 |
| PUBLISHER - BANDAI | DIFFICULTY - EASY |
| FORMAT - CD | AVAILABLE - TBA |



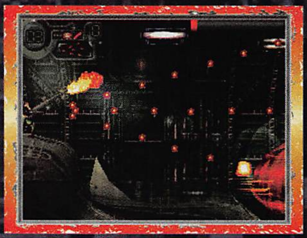

**EGGO**
The main character is Waffle. Eggo? Waffle? ...never mind. Reubus joke.
(Reubus' note: "I beg to differ...")







# THE CONTRA ADVENTURE







When games make the transition from one console to a much more powerful system you expect big things. For example, the move from 16 to 32-bit for *Castlevania* was like a fine cut of filet mignon; smooth, palatable, and utterly enjoyable. Most people were overjoyed to see the Belmonts step into the 32-bit age and sales were brisk. *Contra*, however, didn't make quite as smooth a transition. The move from 16-bit to 32 with *Legacy of War* was more akin to the same filet mignon left out in a very hot room for a number of days till it more resembled pudding than a fine steak (and not a very pretty pudding, I might add). Thankfully, in the early going at least, Appaloosa and Konami apparently have things well in hand with *C: A Contra Adventure*.

This time out, Appaloosa opted to mix the 3/4-view 3D action with some traditional 2.5D gameplay. Thus the game opens in the style of the much-missed 8 and 16-bit *Contra* games. Instead of being trapped in the horrific world of *Legacy of War*, you start out running from left to right in true *Contra* style. The visuals resemble classic *Contra*, with decent backgrounds scrolling by and traditional *Contra* gameplay to back it up. Collect pickups and fight big bosses, though it still doesn't impress as much as either of the two 16-bit *Contra*s. After a few levels of 2D action it's on to more of what the "next-gen" gamer wants (who exactly are these guys?!). Fully polygonal levels from a 3rd-person perspective take the place of the wonders of 2D gameplay (I will hold onto 2D until someone pries it from my cold, dead hand). The *Tomb Raider*-esque sections require a bit of work, with glitchy enemies and broken camera angles, though it's apparent that this is merely a preview-able version with much work yet to be done.

So, filet mignon or roadkill? At this point in time, it's a bit early to judge. The inclusion of 2D elements this time out certainly scores lots of points with me (go figure) but the *L.O.W.*-type sections leave a bit to be desired (please fix the cameras). We'll be back when Konami graces us with a complete, all guns blazin' rev. ***ECM***





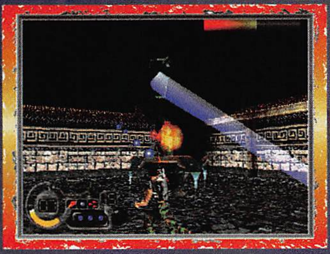














**P PREVIEW** | PlayStation

| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER - APPALOOSA | # OF PLAYERS - 1 |
| PUBLISHER - KONAMI | DIFFICULTY - MEDIUM |
| FORMAT - CD | AVAILABLE - 3RD QUARTER |



**ECM**
Not so L.O.W.








$N_2O$ is the shorthand chemical name for nitrous oxide. It's also known as 'laughing gas,' the loopy juice that the dentist will sometimes give you while filling cavities, or for the really 'lucky,' root canals (think Steve Martin in *Little Shop of Horrors*). It also happens to be the name of Fox Interactive's latest PS title. And after playing for about 30 seconds or so, you can see exactly why they chose that name. The way I figure it, though, *LSD* might have been a more apt title, 'cause this game makes titles like *Tempest 2000* look like a Vivarin high.

*N20* is a 3rd person (or first, optionally) perspective shooter with graphical power to burn. Hurtling down trippy tunnel after trippy tunnel, I have to wonder exactly what the graphic artists and designers were on when they put this psychedelic shooter together. Blast through tube after tube, gunning down all manner of insects: ants, ladybugs, flies, caterpillars, etc. at an eye-fusing 60 FPS.

Let's get the graphics out of the way first, as they're the single most impressive aspect of this red-hot shooter. As I've ranted numerous times in many reviews, each and every month the graphics in PS games seem to get better and better. Generally, Psygnosis was leading the pack in that area, but along came ASC's *One* which took the crown for the past half year. However, even *One* cannot come close to standing up to the raw fury of *N20*. Gremlin (the UK development team responsible) seems to have caught "lightning in a bottle," 'cause you'll be rubbing your eyes in disbelief the further you progress. For starters, the lighting effects present in this game are absolute madness: We're talkin' multiple light sources, lens flares, and 'laser' effects at every twist and turn—Reubus said it reminded him of his disco days (Reubus in a leisure suit...<brrrr>). (Reubus' disclaimer: Sorry, ECM, but disco's a little before my time.) You have never seen lighting like this anywhere—it demolishes even 3D-accelerated games on computers (and there's no sign of this one for PCs, btw). Take a gander at the sheer force the screen shots on this page represent and realize that even with all of the manic lighting and effects it all runs at a mind-numbing 60 FPS with NO slowdown and NO breakup (not a seam to be seen anywhere... at all). This is the benchmark to beat in the sheer "look how easily we can make the PS perform miracles" category.

Beyond the heart-stopping graphics, Fox went the extra step and signed a techno band, *The Crystal Method*, to provide their tunes to complement the visuals. Let me just say that, at best, unless it's an RPG or shooter, I don't pay much attention to the music in games (I'm not one of the *GF* freaks, like Eggo and Dango, that think game music is high art). However, the tunes in this game (blaring through

## SHIPS




















2 PLAYERS





a 100-watt surround sound setup) more than did it for me. People are always raving about *Wipeout XL's* soundtrack when it's quite clear that this game crushes it in mood and intensity. The last game that had music this mood-enhancing was *Tempest 2000* on the Jaguar.

Which brings us to gameplay. And just because I may have wasted all the hyperbole on the graphics, doesn't mean the playability is anything to sneeze at; especially for those of you into shooters of the *Tempest* and *Nanotek Warrior* variety. Which is exactly what *N20* resembles. Flying down tube after tube, hell-bent on crushing oncoming hordes of evil insects, it's like a really bad trip (that, or the Orkin Man's worst nightmare). However, while most shooters of the first-person variety require little beyond scoring massive amounts of points (not that that isn't a plus), this one has some technique to how you score and proceed. For example, the ants which appear around level 6 have a 'leader.' He's a slightly differently textured critter than the rest. If you only blast him, and not the others you'll earn a great deal many more points, although it's obviously easier to gun down the entire lot when swarm after swarm of insects is bearing down on your fragile ship. Speaking of which, you can earn shield power-ups by picking up mushrooms littered throughout the levels (hmmm...), among other implements of destruction. And the ants are only the beginning of the technique that is scattered throughout this game. Suffice it to say that mastering it and achieving point totals in excess of 10 million should prove quite the challenge for even the hardest of the hard-core. As well, jumping and the pretty decent 2-player simultaneous mode make for some interesting games.







While the previous 800 words or so hardly says it all, it should make one thing quite clear: If you like the hottest and latest graphics, a rockin' techno soundtrack, and hard-core gameplay, this is the game for you. If you're from the reflexively deficient crowd, or Parcheesi is more your speed, you may want to think twice about this one (though this is a good way to break out of that mold in a screaming, frothing madness sort of way). Keep feeding me one of these every six months and I'll be a happy, senseless vegetable... just like Bubba! ***ECM***

## BOOMBASTICS POWERED BY THE CRYSTAL METHOD

**R REVIEW** | PlayStation

| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER - GREMLIN | # OF PLAYERS - 2 |
| PUBLISHER - FOX INTERACTIVE | DIFFICULTY - HARD |
| FORMAT - CD | AVAILABLE - NOW |



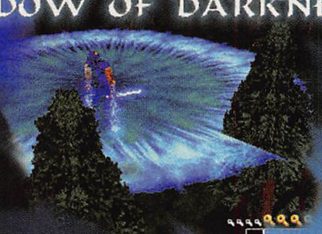
**ECM**
Mushrooms aren't just for *Mario* anymore...

# NINJA
## SHADOW OF DARKNESS







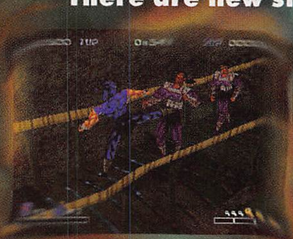




Initial plans for Core's Ninja made it seem like a Tomb Raider-esque action/adventure game set in the mystical, feudal period of Japan. Well, like all plans, Ninja got changed around and the adventure portion got hacked off. The result is a simple action game that made me recall those great days of the ninja video game era.

Following on the heels of such venerable action ninja titles as Ninja Gaiden, Shinobi, and even the Sega Master System game The Ninja (anybody remember that besides me?), last month's preview of our slightly undone copy showed us a decent action game that still needed some tweaking here and there. Well, let me tell you that Ninja looks very promising with the new improvements they've implemented.

There are new stages playable as well as some new magic attacks. The character's ninja magic attacks must have gotten a bump up in the special effects department, because they all look awesome. Brilliant lighting and explosive effects follow every magical attack. The new stages are well detailed and have some great features themselves, such as the lightning bolts that aim for you (much like the way they aim for ECM), smoke trails from steaming pits of lava, and even fog clouds in the somber environs of a cemetery.



Music was available in our version, with some tracks faithful to the Japanese taiko drums, while with others I definitely wouldn't expect Grammy nominations. Many of the sound effects have been changed for the better, though I must admit that I didn't get the lightsaber sound effect that enhanced the sword from the last rev.

Control has some issues and I hope this game will be analog compatible, though control is much better than the last version. My last gripe is a prayer to the gaming gods that Core implements a block ability for your ninja, as most of the enemies can block.

Looking at a September debut, check back here for a full review very soon, as this game looks to resurrect the ninja action genre in a storm of throwing stars. D









| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| U UPDATE | PlayStation | DEVELOPER - CORE | # OF PLAYERS - 1 |
| | | PUBLISHER - EIDOS | DIFFICULTY - MEDIUM |
| | | FORMAT - CD | AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER |



**DANGOHEAD**
Copperfield should learn some ninja magic.






DEAD BALL

DEAD BALL ZONE

# ...animation for groin kicks!




First there was *Power Ball* and *Speed Ball* on the Genesis. Then there was *Pit Ball* and *League of Pain* for the PlayStation. All of these *Rollerball*-inspired futuristic sports games fused the gameplay of your basic team sport with fast paced, over-the-top arcade action. *Dead Ball Zone* is the newest installment in this futuristic genre... and it looks like it could be a big winner.

Developed by Rage Software, *Dead Ball Zone* pits two teams of eight in a brutal contest that is a cross between football and soccer. It is a bleak vision of the future, with the world's remaining political powers using their DBZ (Ed's Note: NOT *Dragonball Z*) teams as leverage for glory and fortune (hello, *Rollerball*). You play the manager (you also control the game), and you must coach your team to the top. Victories equal money, and you're gonna need a lot. Treating your injured players and training better athletes costs money.



The graphics look fantastic—better than any of the genre's past titles. The engine runs around 30 fps and the animation, while limited, is nonetheless effective. This game even has animation for groin kicks!

There's going to be stat tracking and the proper complement of playable modes. Power-ups are available during play, and if effectively used can take a player out... permanently (again, hello *Rollerball*).

The game is still early, and there are some gameplay issues. The highlighted player will switch when you don't want it to (it is based on who is closest to the ball); that's quite fixable, though. The control is excellent, as is player response. The game is fast paced, which can make setting up plays difficult, but the large arenas give you plenty of room to maneuver. *Dead Ball Zone* has major potential. It should wet your appetite until someone finally gets around to releasing a *Rollerball* game. ***EN***

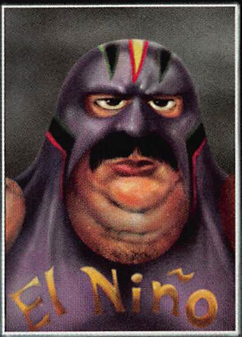


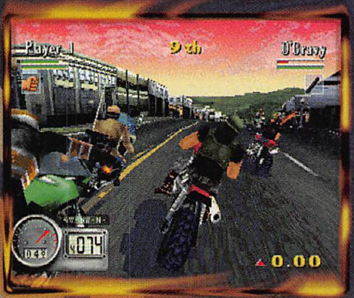



**PREVIEW**

PlayStation

- DEVELOPER - RAGE
- PUBLISHER - GTI
- FORMAT - CD
- # OF PLAYERS - 1-2
- DIFFICULTY - MEDIUM
- AVAILABLE - TBA












# ROAD RASH 3D

Road Rash, which was rudely introduced to me by one of my best friends, stood out on my shelf of games like a zit on the nose of Halle Berry. Well as time passed, *Road Rash* fizzled away from the memories of many players, and I even admit losing those good memories of *Road Rash*ing friends into a signpost. With mediocre versions that are a bit dated on the recent consoles, I was surprisingly greeted with *Road Rash 3D* from nowhere, as treasured recollections of bashing down opponents and five mile flying collisions simmered into my mind. But perhaps I hoped for too much, as *Road Rash 3D* seems to be more of the same, which leaves me pondering if this genre has any room for improvement.

Let's start with the visuals, which I'm a bit torn about. While loading the game takes some time, backgrounds change from rolling hills and valleys to urban buildings and heavy traffic; everything has a decidedly pixelated look. Pop-up isn't as bad as some games, but it's pretty unattractive as hills and cars materialize from nothingness. The frame rate is a bit choppy at certain times (especially during dips in the road), and close-ups of your biker are ugly. The motion capturing of each rasher is done with good detail, and while every character has the same type of attacks, each gang has a distinct style; members of the Dewleys gang throw overhand bashing punches, while Kaffe Boys are adept with precise jabs and backfists.

But the *Road Rash* of my formative years wasn't a graphical masterpiece. It was about the sheer joy derived from the hybrid racing/fighting elements, and as long as *Road Rash 3D* kept it real, who cares about the graphics, right? While the racing elements are well done, the fighting elements are a bit iffy. EA has done a great job of keeping the handling and speed of driving a motorcycle remarkably realistic, as power sliding, leaning into turns, and wheelies add a great deal of realism to the game. But when it comes to fighting opponents, combat results are quite random, as delivering a small jab will take out most opposing bikers. Once in awhile an opposing biker will give you a spot of trouble, but for the most part this game is a bit too easy.

Like many of the recent *Road Rash*es, the sounds are well done, and the music is quite excellent. EA has signed with Atlantic Records for use of their artists' music in *Road Rash 3D*. For those fanatics, Atlantic Records will release a companion soundtrack album to *Road Rash 3D*. Still, if this is where the evolution of *Road Rash* is heading, as an undeniably big budget product that will sell in droves, rather than the fun games of yesteryear, I'd subtract a few years of my life just to get back that good ol' feeling... scabs and all. *D*





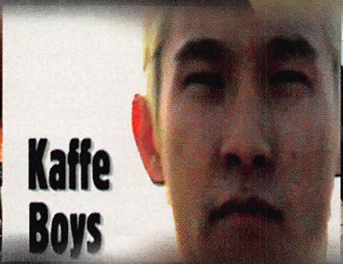


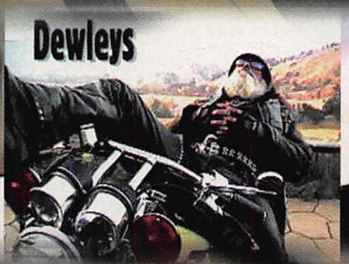


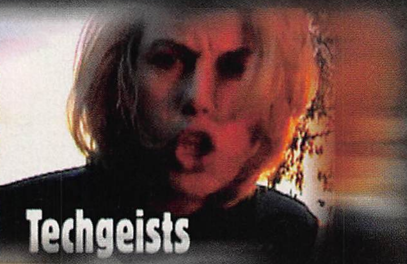













**R REVIEW** — PlayStation

| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER - EA | # OF PLAYERS - 1 |
| PUBLISHER - EA | DIFFICULTY - EASY |
| FORMAT - CD | AVAILABLE - NOW |



**DANGOHEAD**
On the road again <POW!>...

# Vigilante V8

## "...the interactive environments... simply riot-inducing."




**R REVIEW**

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - LUXOFLUX

PUBLISHER - ACTIVISION

FORMAT - CD

# OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - MEDIUM

AVAILABLE - NOW




**EGGO**
Twisted who?

When last we left you... Activision's *Vigilante 8* was poised to topple *Twisted Metal* as the best driving shooter on the PlayStation. The only obstacle barring *V8* from certain greatness? Control issues, which I'm happy to say have been cleared up for the most part. The analog control is still a bit too sensitive for my taste... or maybe it's simply difficult to move your finger a few millimeters while frantically dodging mortars, missiles, dust storms, lightning, etc. Either way, *V8* controls much better than it did before, and that spells trouble for die-hard *Twisted Metal* fans.



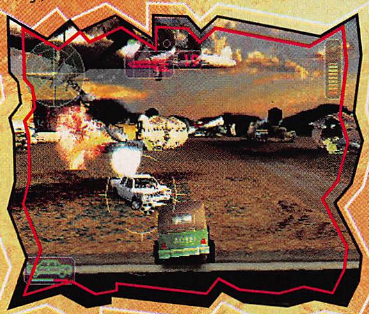
Everything about this game demolishes the competition: graphics, frame rate, environments, special weapons, and to top it all off... it's Dual Shock compatible. We've touched upon the graphics of *Vigilante 8* in the past as being astounding for a driving shooter, and the 30 fps is smoother than *Twisted Metal 1, 2* or *Rogue Trip*. But the interactive environments have been completely overhauled in the final version of *V8*; and now they're simply riot-inducing. You can't imagine the cacophony in the room when a passenger plane crashed in the middle of the airport stage right in front of my car. Then there's always the moving train which plowed into the side of my jeep... and I haven't even mentioned the avalanche you can start on the snow stage. Paris rooftops have nothing on this. Interactive objects abound everywhere you drive: falling rocks, wicked dirt devils (twisters), blimps, etc.

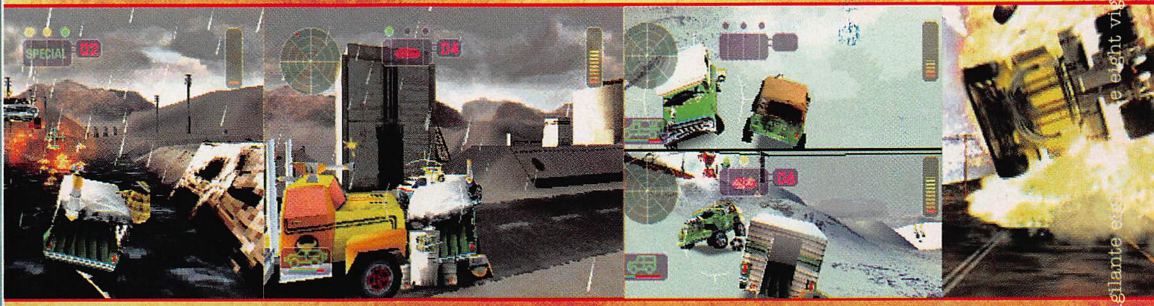


In addition to designing high death toll environments, the twisted (no pun intended) minds of these programmers have contrived some ingenious special weapons. My favorite of these is the beehive, which attaches to the side of your camper, then sends a pack of angry bees to pummel your target (yes, bees PUMMEL... and they're very good at it, mind you). Every special weapon, which visibly attaches to your vehicle, allows you to perform special moves which are weapon-specific. Just input a series of pad commands, and you'll get a special move such as lighting a rocket for an instant turbo boost.

Before letting all this praise overwhelm you, know that *V8* has some problems. The aforementioned control is a bit iffy amidst all the chaos around you. Polygons in the environment are shaky at times, especially at high speeds; but this was also present in *Twisted Metal* and can be overlooked. Lastly, when playing split-screen with two players, the frame rate drops considerably, and movement becomes much choppier. Still... I was a *Twisted Metal 2* fanatic, and *Vigilante 8* flat out beats that game like a red-headed stepchild in all aspects. Viva *V8*!

*E*















As you may or may not know, the Saturn is near the end of its domestic existence. Call me a fool, but I am one of the few Saturn fans here at the esteemed offices of *GameFan*, and I'm deeply saddened that the Saturn must go out with little fanfare. While *Panzer Dragoon Saga* was very nice, it was followed by the horrific (and I don't mean by the zombies and undead in the game) *House of the Dead*, and I was in a wishy-washy state of mind when *Burning Rangers* rolled around. I feared that it was overhyped and would cause me to cringe much like the way *House of the Dead* forced me to see a psychologist. Fortunately, *Burning Rangers*, while far from being awesome and incredible, is good for what it is and will likely satisfy most starving Saturn devotees.

Coming from the revered Sonic Team (known for the heavenly game, *Nights*), *Burning Rangers* casts you in the role of intergalactic firefighter. In the future, exploration and mining in space has expanded, and with this expansion comes the danger of accidents. You can choose from two firefighters: Shou, studly male fire putter-outer, or Tallis, cutesy, bubbly firewoman. You go through stages putting out fires and saving trapped victims in all different types of settings from orbiting space laboratories to moon mining camps.

Movement is semi-similar to *Nights*, as our heroes are able to thrust through the air with the help of jet-packs. While being airborne is limited to temporary hovering and double flipping (this isn't an aerial acrobatic team), thrusting is necessary to jump over firewalls and to avoid instantaneous blasts of backdraft, which is the most feared enemy in the game. While there are drones that attack, your main nemesis is the sudden bursts of blazing death that erupt from the walls, with only a shrieking sound to warn you at the last second. Also, since heat pressure is constantly building, a meter in the middle of the screen indicates the internal pressure of the complex. When it fills red, the built up pressure is released in random spurts, so it's essential to find the victims as soon as humanly (or superhumanly) possible.

Two things *Burning Rangers* borrows from *Nights* are the grading system and the proce-






dure of rescuing trapped victims. Depending on how fast you rescue your victims, how many crystals you collect, how many fires you put out, as well as your time, you're given a score and grade. Rescuing trapped captives requires you to grab enough crystals in the area. Crystals contain concentrated energy, which allows you to teleport people out of the station to safety. This is similar to the collection of the blue balls to overload the Idea Captures in *Nights*.

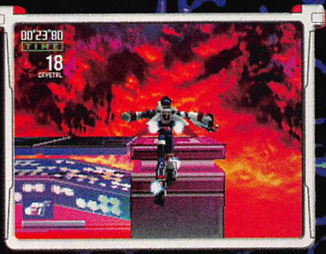
While all the ideas incorporated into the game are great, the graphics are somewhat poor. Polygon drop-out, pop-up, and pixellation are present, and while never in the abundance of *House of the Dead*, you can tell that the Saturn is working way too much overtime in order to make this game look half decent. There are some pretty cool effects, especially when a flashlight is turned on in darker regions, as well as a few explosive effects. But the graphics do take a toll on the playing enjoyment as some of the visuals become an eyesore to deal with. Bosses, however, are well detailed and animated quite nicely, though they also suffer from some pixellation at times.

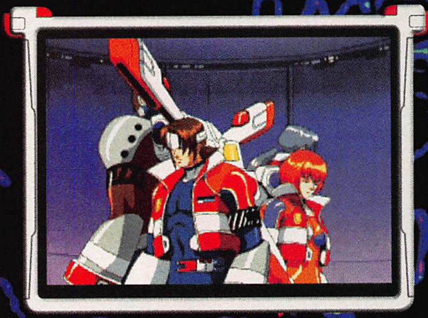
While the game looks a bit snapped, gameplay is quite solid, though it's much better with the analog pad. As ECM found out the hard way, playing with a standard Saturn pad is a bit of a pain; but while using the analog pad (which I brought in the next day), control is very natural. The elements of jumping, thrusting, side thrusting, and backflipping seem natural, which is intensified with the use of the analog pad. Still, the game lacks the sheer joy of *Nights*. While there are large fires to put out and avoid, victims to save, and enemies to destroy, there's that magic missing from the gameplay that made *Nights* so great. Sound effects are okay, but some of the music has to go, especially the intro music which reminded me of every cheesy anime I watched before *Robotech* rolled around (fans of Sonic R's music will probably love it, though).

While three out of the final four games represent the last breath of life on the Saturn (unless you include imports), with the exception of *House of the Dead*, Saturn owners are fortunate. *Burning Rangers* had so many good intentions, and while only half of those concepts and ideas blossomed into solid gaming, they're still good enough for most Saturn owners to enjoy. *Burning Rangers* represents what the Saturn truly was: A great idea that never got the backing it needed. *Burning Rangers*, while far from being on par with *Nights*, at least allows Sega of America to exit the Saturn market with heads held high. *D*

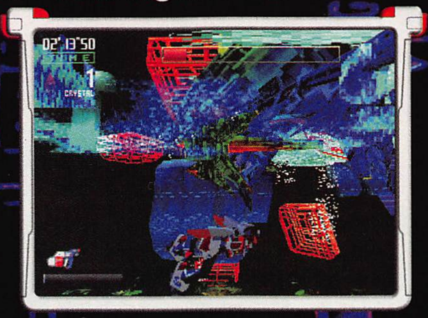








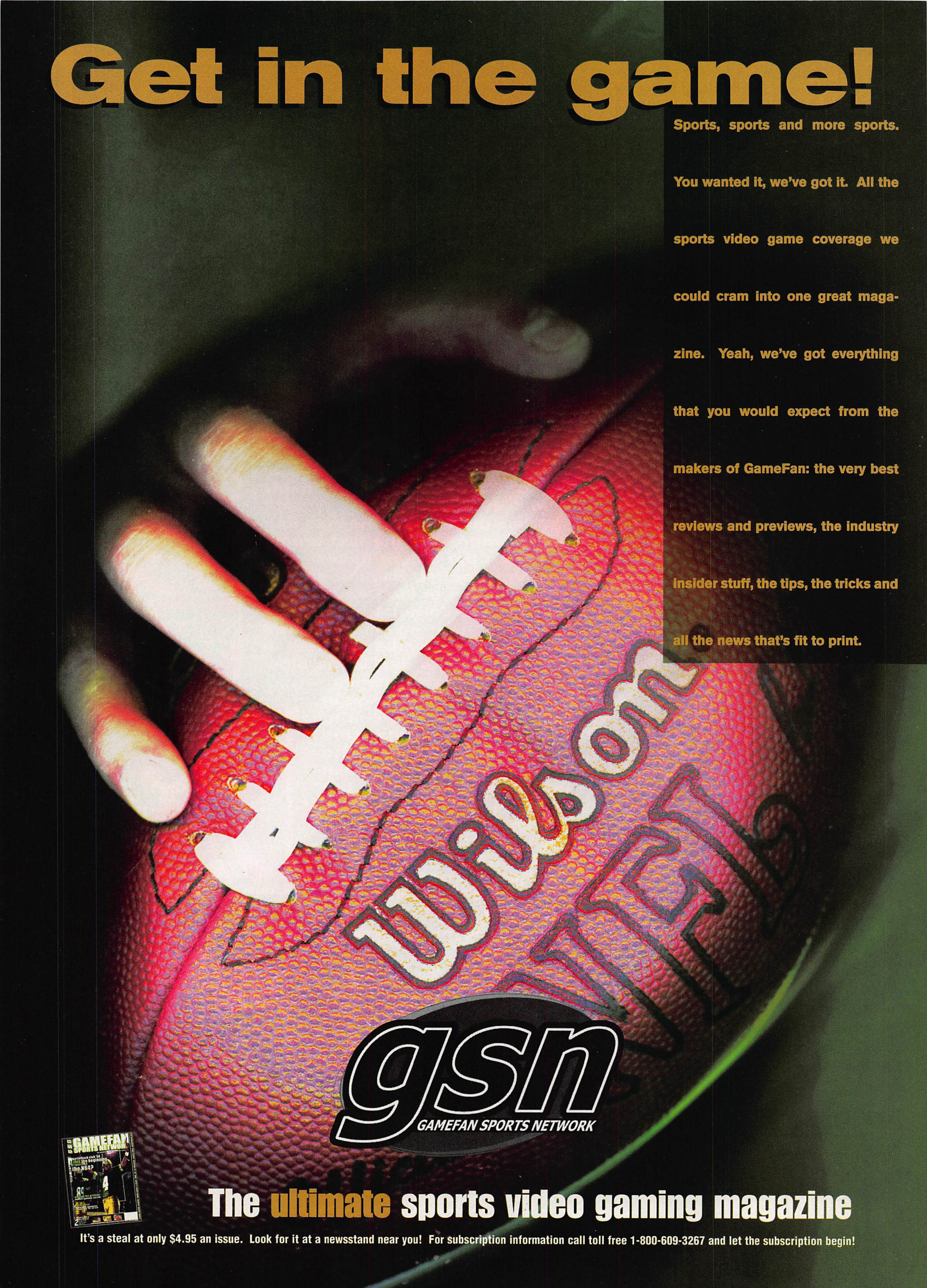



**REVIEW**

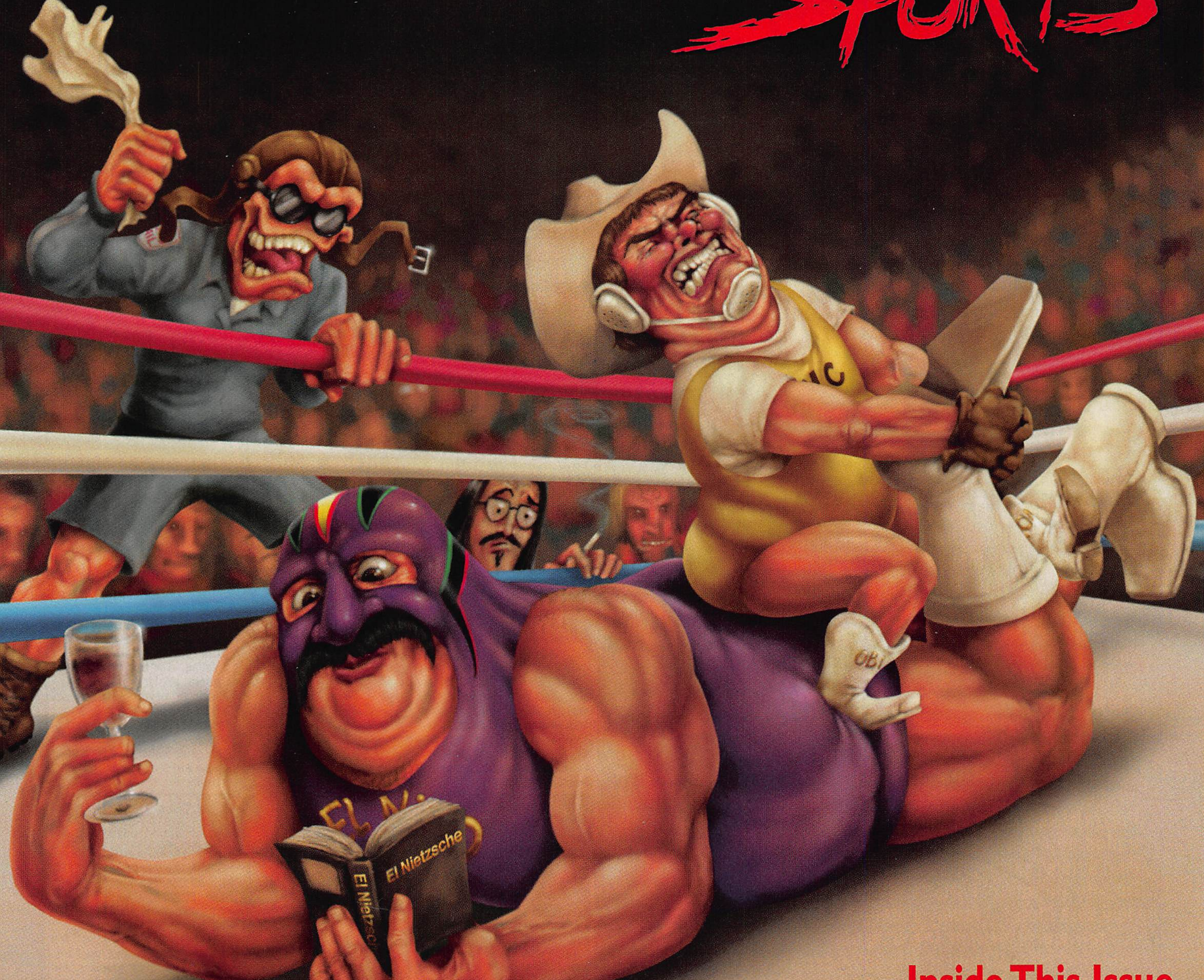
| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER - SONIC TEAM | # OF PLAYERS - 1 |
| PUBLISHER - SEGA | DIFFICULTY - EASY |
| FORMAT - CD | AVAILABLE - NOW |



**DANGO**
"Chris! We can't extinguish the fire on Saturn!"


Get in the game!
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# GAMEFAN SPORTS




**Inside This Issue Of GF Sports:**

Adrenalin's *Brunswick Pro Bowling*

*All-Star Baseball* Makes Fans Of Us All

*Piazza's Strike Zone:* Back To The Minors

*International Superstar Soccer '98* Reviewed!

sports sports sports sports sports sports sports sports sports

# GSN
## gamefan sports network

### "...I have eaten a few more Burritos and bags of potato chips..."



It's time to come off of the top rope into another edition of GameFan Sports. El Niño and I have been wrestling with the content of this issue for the past month. He says American wrestling isn't a sport. I say POW, SPLAT, KER-POWW—(that's me, giving El Niño a swift kick in the pants and putting him in a suplex). Anyway, no one actually won and except for a few bruises, neither of us are any the worse for wear. Besides, I am stronger than he is and I have eaten a few more Burritos and bags of potato chips. But when he unleashes his storm attack on me, I have to duck as the wind speed is incredible.

Anyway back to the business at hand. This month we step up to the plate with GT's first baseball offering, *Mike Piazza's Strike Zone.* As it turns out, Piazza was recently traded from the Los Angeles Dodgers to the Florida Marlins. That's like getting traded from the Chicago Bulls to the Toronto Raptors. Fortunately for him, he's now one of the New York Mets... In any event it all revolved around money.

Then we turn from the baseball diamond to the soccer field and take a look at *International Superstar Soccer '98* from Konami. This is one kickass soccer title for the Nintendo 64. We also review Psygnosis' latest soccer offering, *Adidas Power Soccer*.

There is plenty to talk about in the world of Interactive sports as Fox Sports Interactive has thrown their hat into the gaming ring. They will be bringing out a raft of titles for the PlayStation and, we are hearing, the Nintendo 64, too. Their first titles will be a golf game and a soccer title, both games courtesy of Gremlin Interactive (the developers that jump-started Acclaim Sports). It also happens to be where one of my good friends Gordon "The Hammer" Bellamy works. Fox will follow those two games with a basketball title—probably college as they are not quite there with the NBA license yet. Another friend of mine, Greg "Boom-Shaka" Lassen (former Acclaim employee) now heads up the interactive licensing division for the NBA and is the keeper of the licenses. He is one tough hombre when it comes to getting a license from him. But he is fair.

In other sports gaming news, Radical Entertainment made two announcements recently. They announced they are getting together with Disney to make sports games under the ESPN brand—and then in the next breath they laid off 24 people. Anyway, sometimes that's the way this crazy business works. WHAACK-CRASH-KERPLOW—I have to go and jump back into the ring and kick some El Niño butt—he has loosened his headlock on me and I was able to get a couple of quick elbows in.

Anyway we are kind of like brothers and are just horsing around (pardon the pun). Anyway talk to you next month, my fellow buckaroos. Video Cowboy, over and out.

## VIEWPOINTS viewpoints



Made by the people who brought us Griffey on the SNES!? I'll take their word for it, but I won't use this debacle as an example of what they're capable of. This game has no business being on the N64. Even as an arcade game, this title doesn't work. Oh, the scaling sprite ball is painful!!!

| G | C | P | M | O | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 58 |



Mike Piazza's Strike Zone
Nintendo 64
GTInteractive



In a word, disappointing. The lack of camera angles, the ability to never tell where the ball is going across the plate—as the view is out of whack—is pretty unbelievable. This game would have been good on the SNES maybe, but not on a machine like the N64.

| G | C | P | M | O | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 55 |



Quite simply, the best baseball on the N64. As if the graphics weren't enough, Iguana had the audacity to make the music, control and AI exceptional, as well. On top of all of that, *ASB '99* has so many stats, I went into overload.

| G | C | P | M | O | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 95 |



All-Star Baseball '99
Nintendo 64
Acclaim



Games like this make it all worthwhile. Like El Niño, I was sure something must be wrong with this game. I couldn't find anything too major—and I looked, trust me. Deep stats, slick graphics and solid AI make this the clear winner on the Nintendo 64.

| G | C | P | M | O | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 92 |



This game is gorgeous. The World Cup has been done right, by the fellows at Konami. With the best gameplay of any soccer game, on the market, *ISS '98* is a dominator. With *FIFA* and *Worldwide* out there, too, how can you go wrong?

| G | C | P | M | O | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 8 | 93 |



International Superstar Soccer '98
Nintendo 64
Konami



It used to be that the 3DO version of *FIFA Soccer* from EA was the perennial favorite for diehard soccer fans. Konami has changed that way of thinking. The play control is outstanding and the frame rate is improved. The best soccer title out, for any system.

| G | C | P | M | O | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 9 | 95 |

# ALL STAR BASEBALL '99

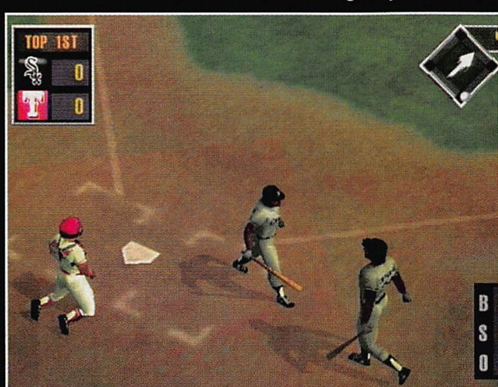



You know how you look at something that seems to be perfect and just know that something must be wrong with it? That blockbuster movie must have bad special effects; that Shelby Cobra's engine must be shot; that hot chick's probably a man (it could have happened to anyone, Eddie)... This is how I felt about *All-Star baseball '99* when I first saw shots of the game.

How could a game look so good and still have all of the other elements necessary to complete the package? Most of the time, it can't. Seriously, how many console titles can boast such a mark? Not many. It's true though, folks; *ASB '99* is the Real Deal.

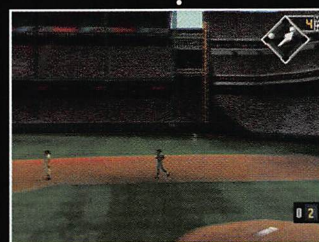
Iguana blew it last year by letting their England-based team develop the title. Nothing against our limey brethren, but that decision made about as much sense as having a team of developers from Des Moines do a cricket sim. This year, *ASB* was back in Texas—and it don't get much more American than that... yeehaw!

As I stated before, the graphics are stunning. Acclaim sent us screens of the ballparks and photos of the real life counterparts. I couldn't tell which was from the game and which was the real thing—honest. The players, too, are gorgeous. A high frame rate, coupled with some of the finest motion capture and texture mapping, make these Boys Of Summer the best looking of any title, ever. Every player on the field is constantly moving in a manner so lifelike that it will freak you out. The only places where the animation is interrupted are in the throws and turn-arounds of the fielders. This was done to keep the control as responsive as possible. It works.

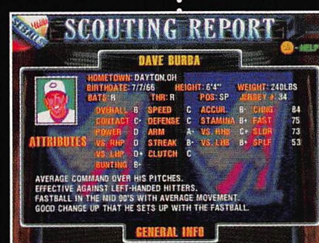




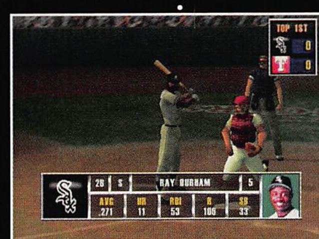

The gameplay is also worthy of high praise. With the exception of a slow pace (something that should have been addressed), every facet is exceptional. The controls are intuitive, the batter/pitcher interface is excellent, and the game's response times are perfect (thanks to the deletion of some unnecessary frames in the fielder's movements).



Game AI is the one area I feared. I have seen so many baseball sims fail because of poor AI. *ASB '99* does not suffer from such afflictions. Not only is its grasp of the game's fundamentals solid, but *ASB* keeps you on your toes with some of the most aggressive computer managers. They'll steal 3rd on you, stretch singles into doubles and throw at you. Pitcher substitution is smart and computer batters will punish you for stupid pitching.




Other areas of note: The dual commentary is good (although a little forced); creating a player is cool; and there are codes to keep things fresh. The stats are godly. There is a draft, scouting reports and the most intensive tracking of any baseball sim. Stats are broken down into so many categories, you won't know what to look at. It even has AVG. vs RHP/LHP and WHIP! No console baseball title has ever had stats this deep, as far as I can remember.

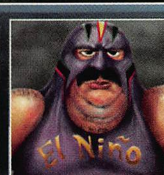



*All-Star Baseball '99* is the best thing going on the N64. Not buying this game is a mistake. ***EN***

R REVIEW

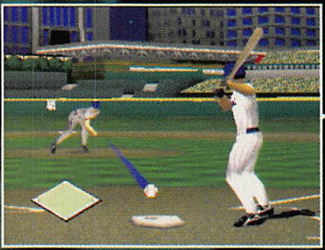
NINTENDO 64

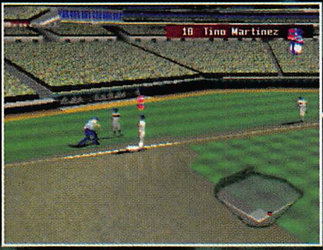
| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER - IGUANA | # OF PLAYERS - 1-4 |
| PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM | DIFFICULTY - MEDIUM |
| FORMAT - CARTRIDGE | AVAILABLE - NOW |

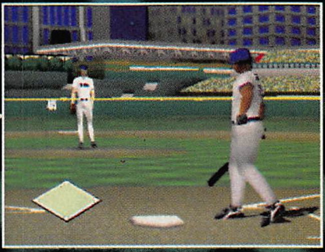


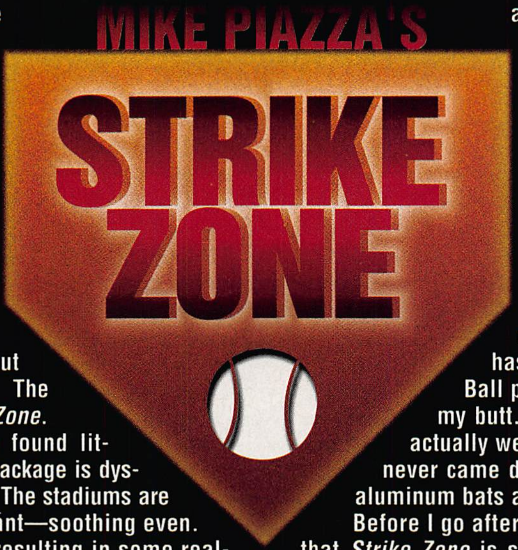

**EL NIÑO**
"...on the 8th day, God created *All-Star Baseball.*"

# Mike Piazza's Strike Zone








Already we have seen the emergence of two worthy N64 baseball titles: *Griffey* and *All-Star*. While *All-Star Baseball* is the clear victor, *Griffey* nonetheless impresses with its firm handle on the fundamentals. Now comes *Mike Piazza's Strike Zone*, which manages to do everything but find it.

*Strike Zone* is developed by Devil's Thumb, the group that was behind the two *Griffey* titles, on the SNES. Personally, I thought both of those games were too arcade-like, but they sold well and entertained many. The same will not be the case with *Strike Zone*.

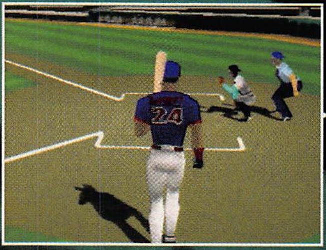
Good ideas and execution can be found littered about the game, but the overall package is dysfunctional, at best. Take the graphics. The stadiums are well replicated and the colors are vibrant—soothing even. The engine is also running at 30fps, resulting in some really smooth scrolling. Unfortunately, the illusion (as well as some of the gameplay) is marred by the presence of the players. They are poorly designed (and what year are those uniforms from?) and move nothing like real people. Motion capture is painfully missing. As for the 30fps, it may help the scrolling, but not player movement. There are minimal animations available to the batters and pitchers, so all of their movements are broken up. To watch a pitcher's wind-up and release is painful. I just want to add that, while *Strike Zone* is a 3D game, the ball appears to be a scaling sprite!

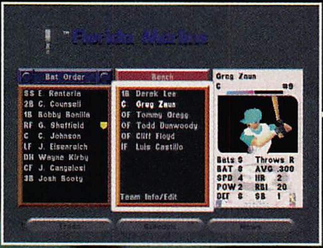
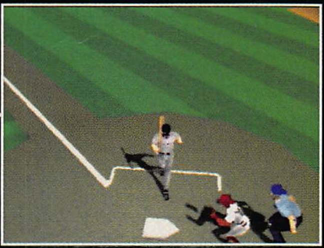
How does this hurt playability? Well, when frames of animation are missing from pitching motions and batting swing, it's pretty hard to successfully get a handle on the pitcher-batter interface. If a baseball title doesn't have that, it doesn't have anything. Making the interface even more difficult is the camera angle: the view isn't directly behind the plate?! It is off to the side, robbing you of the ability to see exactly where the ball is coming over the plate. What's that all about?

The game's AI is competent, but earns no awards for perfection (but neither has any of the competition, for that matter). Ball physics are questionable, too. Realistic, my butt. Mo Vaughn hit an 800-foot homer that actually went through the Dome, at Minnesota, and never came down. Apparently the MLB started using aluminum bats and didn't tell me.

Before I go after the game for ball physics, I should say that *Strike Zone* is supposed to be more of an arcade title than a sim. This should explain a little as to how fast the ball moves and how easy it is to hit. The arcade angle cannot be used as a crutch, though. Many aspects just don't seem right. Plate collisions are cheesy, managerial options are limited and the music doesn't work.

The recap: *Mike Piazza's Strike Zone* is a wash-out. Smooth, responsive fielding and some nice looking stadium graphics are far from enough to remedy the bad player animations and poor batter-pitcher interface, which make the game painful to play. An uninspired first effort that needed some more retooling. ***EN***



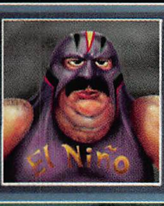




R REVIEW

NINTENDO 64

DEVELOPER - DEVIL'S THUMB
PUBLISHER - GT INTERACTIVE
FORMAT - CARTRIDGE

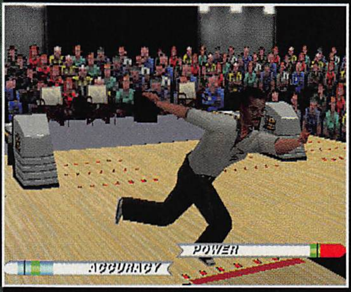
# OF PLAYERS - 2
DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
AVAILABLE - NOW

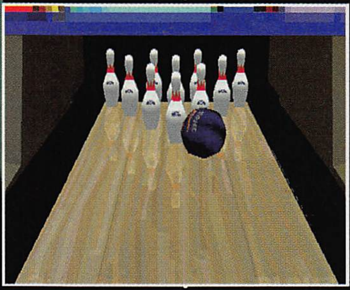


**EL NINO**
Will this have an effect on his contract negotiations?

## BRUNSWICK CIRCUIT PRO BOWLING

# BRUNSWICK CIRCUIT PRO BOWLING



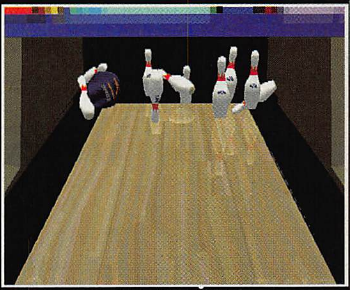
One of the most underrated games from last year was *Ten Pin Alley*. An extremely entertaining bowling sim, *Ten Pin Alley* wowed gamers with an alternative type of sports simulation that combined the realistic physics of bowling with the kitsch of the classic bowling experience.

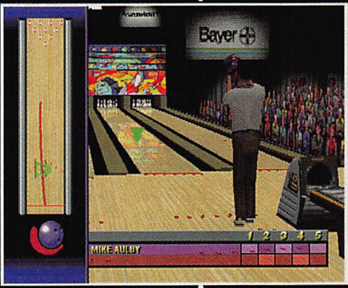
Those same developers, Adrenaline, are back with another stellar looking title: *Brunswick Circuit Pro Bowling*. Armed with official licensing from the country's biggest bowling name and a monster game engine, *Pro Bowling* should be a big hit.

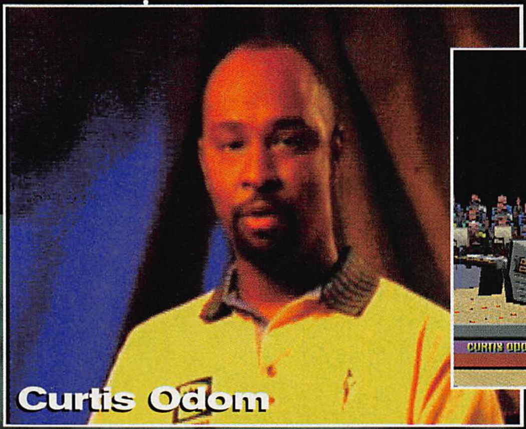
With the name Brunswick comes 11 pro bowlers and authentic equipment and tournaments. A player edit feature will also be available so you can create your own bowler. The game will feature four play modes: Open Play, Tournament, Practice, and Career. Career mode is where the best action is, giving *Pro Bowling* some good depth.

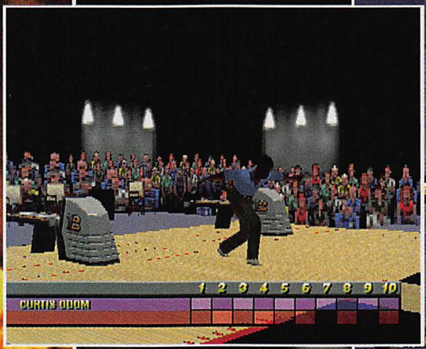
The engine, as stated before, is fantastic. A step above *Ten Pin's*, this baby has more contact points on the pins, and is much more user friendly. *Ten Pin* had one of the highest learning curves of any game I had ever played. *Pro Bowling*, utilizing a meter much like that in a golf sim and more controlled spin options, cuts down on the high level of variation that made bowling in *Ten Pin* so unpredictable.

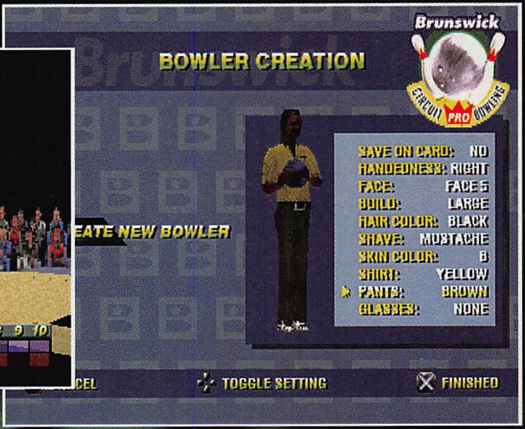
Also look for some fun options like bowling without the lights on and glow-in-the-dark bowling. The finished product needs little improvement over the preview copy to make *Brunswick Circuit Pro Bowling* one of the most enjoyable (leisure) sports games of the year. It will be available in August. ***EN***





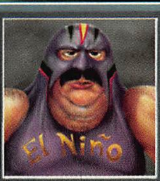




P PREVIEW

PlayStation

| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER - ADRENALINE | # OF PLAYERS - 6 |
| PUBLISHER - THQ | DIFFICULTY - MEDIUM |
| FORMAT - CD | AVAILABLE - AUGUST |




**EL NIÑO**
I like my balls POLYURETHANE!

# ADIDAS POWER SOCCER '98

## adidas power soccer



If nothing else, *Adidas Power Soccer* has been steadily improving since its beginnings. Slowly but surely it has gained ground on such juggernauts as *Worldwide Soccer*, *International Superstar Soccer*, and *FIFA*. Still not to that level, *Adidas Power Soccer '98* nonetheless looks to be a welcome competitor.

*Adidas Power Soccer '98* is scheduled for release during this year's World Cup. I haven't played it yet, so all I have to go on, gameplay-wise, is what I know from past titles. That control was only slightly above average. With the introduction of analog, though, things will assuredly be better.

As far as graphics, *APS '98* has made some big leaps forward. On top of that, 350 motion captured animations have been added, as well as some nicer textures.

You will have access to 400 (yes, 400) world-class teams; that's 10,000 players, Sparky. Also, there will be 34 fully rendered stadiums to play in.

One of the best features of *APS '98* is its special moves. Over 60 special moves can be executed by the players. You can also string these moves together in combos, for the best in over-the-top soccer action.

The game will support up to four players via multi-tap and four camera angles will be available for play. You will have the option to set the ref "strictness" as well as customize your formations and game strategy. For those of you that care, the game will contain six languages to choose from. So, if you want to touch up on your Dutch, here's a great opportunity. *EN*















P PREVIEW

PlayStation

| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER - SHEN | # OF PLAYERS - 1-4 |
| PUBLISHER - PSYGNOSIS | DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE |
| FORMAT - CD | AVAILABLE - JUNE |



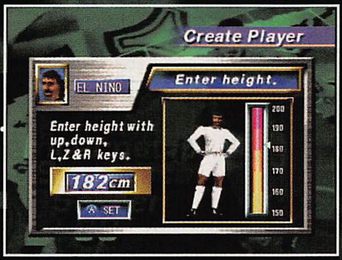

**EL NIÑO**
At least there's one reason to go to France...

## INTERNATIONAL SOCCER SUPERSTAR










# INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER '98

It's getting tough to differentiate between the multitude of soccer sims on the market. Many of them, from *Worldwide Soccer* to *FIFA: World Cup*, are at such a level that it is impossible to say which is better. The same goes for *International Superstar Soccer '98*. While I always maintained that it was the best soccer game for the home console, I just don't know any more. While it is still a spectacular soccer game, what makes it any better than the competition? Nothing, really. The fact of the matter is, any one of these games is a surefire winner. Here's what makes this one a member of the elite...

*International Superstar Soccer '98*, Konami Sports' one shining star, is a soccer staple. For years now, the series has blessed us with some of the best sound, graphics, and gameplay. Every year is a step higher on the ladder of evolution; every year our appetites are satiated.

While *ISS* will be coming out on both PlayStation and Nintendo 64, the N64 version will be released first. This version will feature more teams (54 as opposed to 40), and more stadiums (eight instead of five). A whopping 17,000 frames of animation make the on-field action read like poetry. These little guys look and move so real! I still get impressed by it.

For the first time ever, *ISS* will come accompanied by commentary. BBC fave, Tony Gubba, will be the voice man. While most wouldn't recognize a British commentator's voice if it blared in your ears, there is something about having an English accent attached that lends the game more credibility.

Totally unnecessary is the inclusion of an endorsement. This is an out-moded marketing ploy, but publishers still seem to think it's important. Oh well, who am I to argue... The player is Carlos Valderrama, a name which means nothing to me, but I do recognize the guy with the Carrot Top fro. He's the captain of the Columbian National Team as well as a bona fide superstar for the Miami Fusion. (I hope, for his sake, he doesn't score on his own goal, during the Cup... YIKES! What was that all about, back in '94? I was upset, to say the least, when Billy Buckner blew my beloved Red Sox's '86 World Series bid, but come on—I didn't wax 'im. Exile suited the crime, just fine).

Well, anyways, back to the subject at hand... *ISS* tops off its good looks and commentary with intense gameplay. This series has never let me down. The game speed is brisk, the players respond quickly, and the control is so intuitive, that you'll be competing in no time. While I still dread playing games with the N64 controller, it's relatively painless here. It can still be a problem navigating the C buttons (especially if your hands are as big as mine, aye caramba!), but no biggie. You can't ask for much more in the way of gameplay.

Lastly, I'll remind you that there are all of the standard play modes, including a training mode, to allow you a chance to sharpen your skills, as well as the popular Scenario Mode. There are sixteen scenarios, each with a different objective, but all of them- exciting.

*International Superstar Soccer '98* actually manages to make the sport of soccer look interesting! Now *that's* impressive. ***EN***








R REVIEW

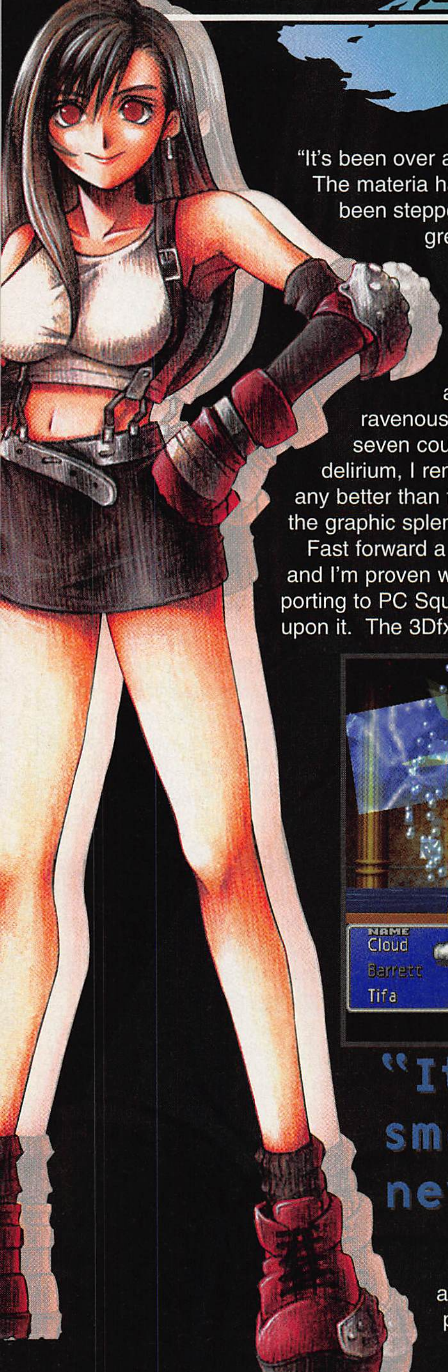
NINTENDO 64

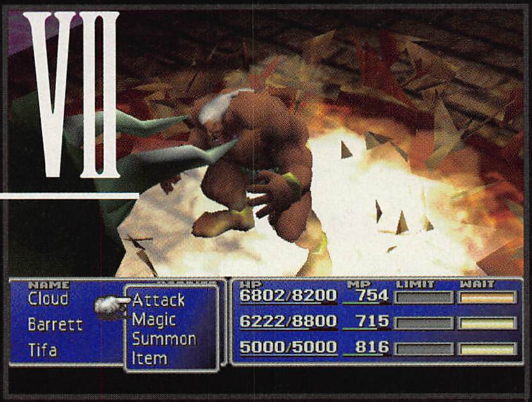
| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER - KONAMI | # OF PLAYERS - 1-4 |
| PUBLISHER - KONAMI | DIFFICULTY - ADJ |
| FORMAT - CARTRIDGE | AVAILABLE - NOW |




**EL NIÑO**
It's ISS, just go buy it.

# FINAL FANTASY VII






"It's been over a year... and I can still smell the shrink wrap. The materia had never been used. The towns had never been stepped in. *FF7* was called... 'Quite possibly the greatest game ever made!' And it was. It really was..." <cue angelic voices>

That was early last year, when the import PlayStation version of *FF7* first started soiling pantaloons with its Kodak moment backgrounds and charge-for-admission summon spells. Back then, my ravenous eyes were eager to devour the visual seven course feast that was *VII*. In the midst of my delirium, I remember thinking to myself, "It doesn't get any better than this. No other game will be able to surpass the graphic splendor of this game any time soon."

Fast forward a year, switch platforms, add a 3Dfx card... and I'm proven wrong. Nothing but praise goes to Eidos for porting to PC Square's masterpiece—and actually improving upon it. The 3Dfx card makes miracles possible, giving *FF7*










**"It's been over a year... and I can still smell the shrink wrap. The materia had never been used. The towns had never been stepped in".**

a visual makeover in the graphics department; and the higher resolution of a computer monitor compared to a television set adds that much more to the spectacle.

I started writing this review with the assumption that everyone had either seen *Final Fantasy VII* on the PlayStation or read the many volumes of coverage in *GameFans* of yore. But, I'm sure there are some of you out there who either avoided the PlayStation phenom, bought your PS recently, or are a PC-only gamer. For those that don't know the story of *VII*, you control Cloud, a mercenary soldier who joins Avalanche, a grassroots vigilante group trying to right the wrongs of the Shinra Corporation, a monstrous company which rules the world with its monopoly on Mako Energy, the fuel used to power everything. Unfortunately, harvesting the Earth's resources of Mako power also drains the lifeforce out of the planet and all living things.

Cloud and the rest of the Avalanche team are out to stop Shinra from slowly destroying the world because of their greedy machinations. Joining ther quest will be a motley cast of

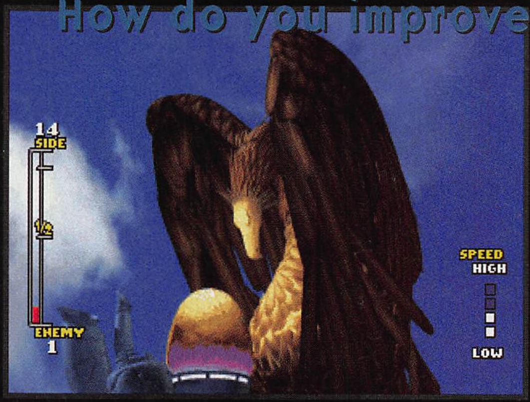
**Final Fantasy VII**

| |
|---|
| Developer: Square |
| Publisher: Eidos |
| Format: CD |
| Difficulty: Easy |
| Number of Players: 1 |
| Available: 3rd Quarter |

# Final Fantasy VII



## How do you improve a masterpiece? Simple... 3Dfx




characters including: the infamous Cid (a machine-oriented character who has appeared in every *Final Fantasy*), Vincent (a vampiric sharpshooter), Red XIII (a talking dog with the intelligence of a man), Barrett (the gun-for-a-hand head of the Avalanche group), Yuffie (mischievous, thieving ninja girl), Cait Sith (well, I still don't know what it is), and Aerith and Tifa (the primary love interests). The game features a detailed storyline, classic role-playing elements, countless towns to explore, turn-based battle scenes, regular magic spells, caller/summon spells, and the materia system (which lets you customize what spells and effects you wish to develop).

In case you haven't been attending your *Final Fantasy Visuals* history class like a good gamer, Professor Eggo will now walk you through the evolution of *VII*'s visuals. In the PlayStation era, there was the basic *FFVII* on a home television set. This was the average owner of *VII* at the time, and there were many of them. Then, gradually a select few group of gamers known as the S-Video











junkies stood out from the pack. Their S-Video cables and their more highly evolved television sets provided them with a distinct visual advantage; crisp letters and improved textures—which translated into eye-popping visuals and leering grins.

The S-Videos ruled for a very long time, crushing the less fortunate normal TV owners with their sharper images. But in a surprise event which historians named the "Great Console Shift," the once proud S-Video clans were decimated by groups such as the JAM board. Utilizing more costly and advanced technology, JAM users were able to view *FF7* on computer monitors with a simple VGA card. Cleaner, sharper textures allowed JAM users to make out finer details, and the added lines of resolution improved vision considerably. Then, out of the mass of *FF7s* struggling for power, one arose from the pack to unite the clans. The almighty 3Dfx, aided by the Wizard Eidos, overpowered all the lesser visuals with its incredible processing power and tear-jerking textures. And that is where we stand now. Any questions?

To give you an idea of the level of detail achieved in the PC version, you can count the strokes of Kanji on the Mog's headband in the summon spell. Remember the glossy gleam in Aerith's eyes during the intro CG of the game? You can see that same reflection in the polygon character Cloud's eyes when he's walking around a town.

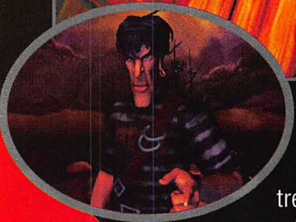
In case you were wondering, none of the sounds have been changed in the PC version from the PS *FF7*. The music is still PCM, sorry redbook lovers. Guess it would be too much to pull Nobuo Uematsu away from his work to arrange an entirely new score for the PC version.

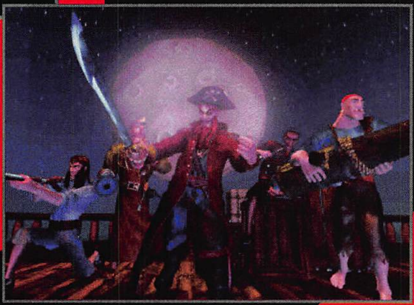
We'll be back with the full-blown *GameFan* review with all the expected glitz, glam, and adjectives next issue. ***E***





# Red Jack
## Revenge of the Brethren

One of my most memorable gaming experiences stems from playing *Pirates!* on the Apple II. As a swashbuckling sea captain, I got to kill privateers, take over towns, woo busty beauties and search for lost treasures. Not too shabby for a sixteen-year-old kid.

*Pirates!* re-emerged, years later as *Pirates! Gold!*, on the Genesis, but that was the last I saw of it. Much to my dismay, developers seem to have turned a blind eye to the pirate genre, preferring to make more of the same old, uninspired drivel that the industry loves to spoon-feed us. While this may not be the *Pirates!* sequel I was looking for, it is nonetheless a welcome change. The game is *RedJack: Revenge of the Brethren* and it will be available for both Mac and PC.

Forget all of that corridor shooting and real time strategy that seems to have taken over the PC market. *RedJack* is an old school graphic adventure starring you, a young farmer who dreams of life as a pirate. You need money to save your farm—and your lady. The only way to earn a quick buck is to take up company with a band of rogues who privateer off French ships in the West Indies. Along the way, you uncover the story of *RedJack* and his treasure. Unlocking the mystery of RedJack will reveal to you the way to the treasure...

What sets *RedJack* apart from most graphic adventures is its quality and the introduction of real time fighting. Although most of the adventure is of the point-and-click variety, you will also be given the chance to hone your swashbuckling skills. Certain encounters will lead to sword fighting and gunplay. The engines for such combat resemble those seen in the Sega CD title, *Heimdall*: Attack your opponent high or to the left or right and parry attacks in the same manner. While this is a rudimentary style at best, it is a nice break in the slow pacing of the story.

As you can see, the graphics are outstanding. Full of lush color and eerie atmosphere, every area, from the deep forest to a dank cave, is gorgeous. What you can't see from these pictures is the animation of the characters you interact with... almost lifelike.

To compliment the looks, *RedJack* also has some of the best surround sound and ominous background music. It is the last ingredient in a successful mix that makes *RedJack* come to life.

The story is compelling and includes over forty puzzles to keep you mentally sharp. The interface is likewise excellent, making playing very easy to pick up. Although this was only a previewable copy, it is clear little will change from its present state. This is O.K. though, because right now *RedJack: Revenge of the Brethren* is a delight to play. Now if only someone would redo *Pirates! Gold*, I'd be in buccaneer heaven. ***El Niño***





### Red Jack

Developer: Cyberflix
Publisher: THQ
Format: CD
Difficulty: Medium
Number of Players: 1
Available: July

# Might & Magic VI



Oh the memories. *Might & Magic II* was one of my favorite RPGs... ever. Heck, this whole franchise is a gem. Imagine my joy when I found *Might & Magic VI: The Mandate Of Heaven* on my desk when I arrived at work. It amazes me that New World Computing is literally across the street from *GameFan* and we've never met.

If you've played the series, you know what to expect. It's a first person game, with parties six big (including two NPCs). Party creation is detailed, with you building your warriors from the ground up. Noticeably absent are several of the classes once available;

## Expect long hours of enjoyment.

you can now choose from just six: paladin, knight, druid, archer, mage, and cleric. You can choose from only a couple of skills at the beginning, but learn new skills as the game progresses. One really annoying aspect? The character pictures. They are ludicrous looking, completely out of place in a mystical adventure.

The realm of *M & M VI* is filled with many familiar denizens, from the lowly goblins to the mighty cuisinarts. Many of the game's magical weapons are similar, but a myriad of new items are there to be found. Each item looks different and will change the look of your character. A totally outfitted paladin looks really cool!

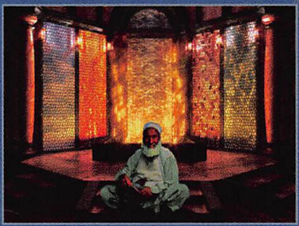
It ain't *Quake*, but now you have the option of fighting in real time. Once skilled in this manner of fighting (no small task) you can wreak serious havoc. Large groups of enemies abound though, so it is best to meet them in turn-based combat, leaving the real time for smaller groups or one-on-one. Large groups will surround you if you aren't careful, and that'll end your adventure real quick.

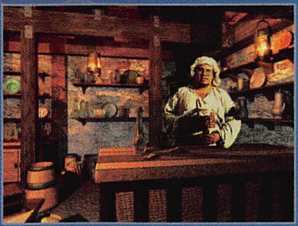
In past *M & M* titles, your backpack could carry a certain number of items, regardless of size. Adding a little more realism, the backpack is now divided into segments. You must fit the items into this area, so carrying a couple of big items (like shields and pikes) will use much of the space. Likewise, you can carry multitudes of herbs, rings, etc... Stealing a page out of the *Dungeon Master* games, you now get to mix herbs into potions to find out what kinds of effect can be produced. It is a learning experience, so don't expect to be able to concoct a killer juice right off the bat.

The storyline is driven like in past titles: Accept quests and then collect the rewards. These quests will take you into stranger lands filled with more dangerous monsters and more difficult quests. Search the realm for trainers and teachers who can teach you the arts of long lost skills and spell powers. Guilds can be found in any town and it is here that you can develop your abilities even farther. Expert and Master levels are what you strive for and those that reach them reap major benefits...

*Might & Magic VI* is an excellent RPG. It may not be the sleekest looking title for the PC, but its solid interface and engrossing storyline—something that has been the strength of all of its previous installments—make it a must for RPG fans. ***El Niño***


















**Might & Magic VII**

Developer: New World Computing
Publisher: 3DO
Format: CD
Difficulty: Medium
Number of Players: 1
Available: Now

# Flesh Feast

## " Blood-spurting, head-rolling, corpse-hacking action!"

Don't tell Mom and Dad, kids, but I think I just stumbled upon a scary little secret. Like most people, I assumed I knew who to look out for in the "people to avoid" column of society. You know, for the most part, I tend to stay away from the serial killers, Springer fans, and females that find RuPaul attractive... but after a quick spin through SegaSoft's latest gaming gore-fest on the PC, *Flesh Feast*, I'm adding game developers to my list.

*FF* is sort of a mesh between *Dawn of the Dead*, the SNES title *Zombies Ate My Neighbors*, and a sadistic session of a little kid's experiments with the effects of power tools on his older sister's Barbie dolls. The game casts you as one of three primary characters trying to uncover the mystery of an island full of hungry zombies who seem to have watched *Alive* one too many times, and must hack and slash your way through the game and its many club-footed, man-munching mumble-men to get to the bottom of things. *FF*'s missions are all pretty straightforward, consisting mostly of the standard "grab the key, unlock the door" hum-drum, but the levels are huge and well detailed, from the super-duper shopping mall to the cool sports center. The game isn't exactly shooting for hard-core puzzle elements.

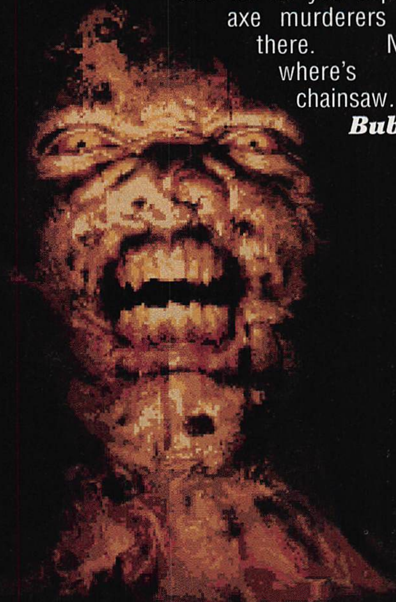
Thing is, *FF* won't win too many points for originality in the story department, 'cause the creativity is in the killin', my friends. You can club, chainsaw, shoot, poke, punch, kick, nail, impale, run over, and drown your adversaries in this one with everything from a baseball bat to a freshly liberated zombie arm (adding new meaning to the phrase "rip your arms off and beat you to death with them" line). You even get into some hilarious Internet contests, including what Big Bubba likes to call the "multi-player deathmunch," where you can try to give your friends some good ol' zombie lovin'.



As if the in-game gore wasn't enough, the game looks damn good with 3-D acceleration and has some slick video sequences, which makes for an oh-so juicy killing spree. *FF* also has some cool semi-techno tracks to go with it, making it a decent overall package.

While *Flesh Feast* won't appeal to everyone, if you get a kick out of sick humor in the guise of a serious slasher and like classic no-frills gameplay, this could easily be a great exercise for all you aspiring axe murderers out there. Now, where's my chainsaw....

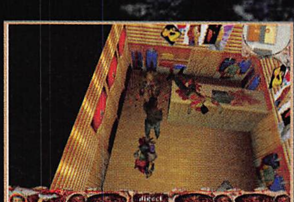
***Bubba***





**Flesh Feast**

Developer: SegaSoft
Publisher: Sega
Format: CD
Difficulty: Easy
Number of Players: 1-8
Available: Now









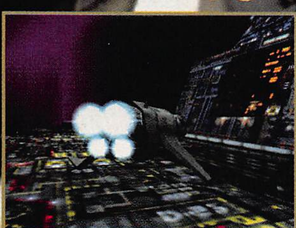


## "Tastes just like chicken!"

# Descent Free Space



## "No Gravity = No Dramamine!"









A few years back, Parallax Software came out with a title that not only got this writer in to modern PC gaming, but also got back to the true root of fun. And what might that be, you ask? Well, it happens to be a combination of things, actually: Fast, dizzy, motion sickness-inducing visuals, tons of opposition, and last but not least, the ability to turn that opposition into so much metallic rubble with your handy-dandy laser cannons. The name of the game was *Descent*, and it was then the king of 3-D claustrophobic madness. Well, Volition, Inc., creators of this classic blast-fest, are back with the *Descent* namesake, but have taken a different approach to the now famous design, and are out to help all those weenies who couldn't handle the tight quarters *cough*Eggo*cough*cough*.

*Descent Freespace: The Great War* is an interesting twist on the old corridor chaos, taking the great control and a hyped-up version of the original visuals and slapping them down in an environment that should be big enough to satisfy people who don't dig hallways—outer space! That's right, the classic *Descent* engine will try to tackle the great beyond as you take the role of a member of the Terran military defending the galaxy from a race known as the Shivans, and to help out, Volition is throwing in a ton of cool options. Using the game's built in messaging system, you can give orders to your fellow squad members. There are a slew of in game commands, and *DF* really strives to bring a sim feel to this once action-only title. Missions range from protection to search and destroy and the in-game messages really add to the experience.

Some other cool features include Multi-player support for up to ten players, FRED—the Freespace Mission Editor, which will allow you to make your own missions, a full net-based stats system for ranking top pilots, and more. The version we played had some serious visual flair, from the giant capital ships, to the enemy fighters, and the explosions were all top notch. The action was fast and furious, and the levels themselves all managed to convey a great sense of speed and depth.

The final should be coming out of hyper-space soon after you read this preview, and if the gang at Volition can pull all these elements together, *Freespace* will definitely be one to watch upon release. ***Bubba***

## "Has Wing Commander met its match?"

| Descent Free Space |
|---|
| Developer: Volition, Inc. |
| Publisher: Interplay |
| Format: CD |
| Difficulty: Medium |
| Number of Players: 1-10 |
| Available: 3rd quarter |

Waka's Japan Now!

# JAPAN NOW




Ladies and gentlemen! Sega has been out of the picture long enough! Sega's president had some inspiring and emotional words to say about the release of their new sytem. This exclusive Japan Now! takes a look at what Sega will be bringing to us in the digital entertainment industry as we enter the new millenium...

## Behold! The unveiling of the DreamCast! May 21st 1998 - Tokyo Japan



Comments from Sega of Japan's president opened the show, and this is what he had to say...

"Sega's 50th year anniversary will come upon us in the year 2001. We here at Sega started to develop a home machine with certain questions in mind. 'What do the people want?' and 'What to create for the for the 21st century?' Sega has joined with a powerful multimedia company and has come forth with... The Dreamcast. The Dreamcast will continue to progress and develop a new 'brand' of digital entertainment that will be created for our world, and not for the sake of the game machine."



Five games at launch with half of those from Sega themselves on proprietary 1 Gigabyte CDs. Games will be a bit more expensive than present software due to the fact that they will be on a new format.

Introduced to the world this morning, the 'memory card' that will plug into the Dreamcast conrol pads will be released on July 11 along side the Japanese debut of Godzilla. It will come out with Atsumete Godzilla, the first 'game' to run on it. It's a monster illustrated book; sort of like a Godzilla digital comic.












Microsoft tycoon Bill Gates, also commented and released info about the development and contribution towards the Dreamcast machine. According to his statement, "It is possible for the consumer to experience real, high-quality 3D technology as well as utilizing the systems' communication function. Because of the Windows CE operating system that was created directly for multimedia technology, it offers a highly flexible range for developers to utilize their creative skills and develop software with no boundaries. This range of development was due to the Dreamcast's budget. Since it offers a limitless environment for developing software, the games will cost pennies to make, thus making the games better and offering that *quality* we expect."



Five games at launch with half of those from Sega themselves on proprietary 1 Gigabyte CDs. Games will be a bit more expensive than present software due to the fact that they will be on a new format.

Sega predicts one million consoles sold in Japan by March, with two million by the end of '99. As for Saturn software after Dreamcast's debut, expect only a minor trickle as everybody is jumping on the DC bandwagon.

## Japanese DreamCast Schedule

June 8-9: Sega will announce the Dreamcast Dream Team (aren't we clever).
Mid-September: A show will be held at a conference and the titles of the games will be officially announced.
Oct. 9-11: Fall Tokyo Game Show- Playable to the public at this show.
November: Sega will show Dreamcast at its own Digital Circus show. Price will not be announced until shortly before the sale date of November 20.
(A U.S. release date for the system is set to be around Fall '99.)

# DreamCast Specs

CPU — Hitachi SH4 (128 bit)
Graphics Engine, 200mhz/360mps/1.4 Gflops
Graphics Engine — NEC Power VR2
(3 million polygons per second)
Sound — YAMAHA XG, ADPCM/PCM64ch
Main Memory — 64Mbit SD-RAMx2 (16Mbit)
Modem — 33.6 Kbps
OS — Microsoft Windows CE Custom Version
CD-Rom Drive — 12x
Colors — 16,777,216
Secondary Memory — Visual Memory System
Weight — 2kg
Dimensions — 190mm(w) x 195mm(h) x 78mm(d)

# SNK to team up with DreamCast!!

SNK has announced that they will embark on the DC bandwagon with a portable game machine of their own. Not to be confused with the PDA for the DreamCast, the "Negeo Pocket" is set to be compatible with the DreamCast system, and will be available mid-June '98. Fifteen titles are already in the works including; sports, RPG, fighting, educational games, and a (yuck) Shougi game. The current color is still to be decided, but they have also said that they will be releasing seven colors. At the moment, the system display is an 8-bit monochrome LCD screen with a 16-bit CPU, but a color display version will be out by the end of the year. And finally, they will be developing 'extra' add-ons such as a radio communication unit that will be released in the not too distant future.

Other options include a calendar, world clock, and astrological map. For these features, the Negeo Pocket can be used as a portable information terminal as well. As far as compatibility with the DreamCast is concerned, users will be able to 'link-up' by using a special adaptor (price is still unknown). The Negeo Pocket can then use the data from itself or the DreamCast to play on either systems! An example that was used was say for instance, if you have a 'saved data' from a fighting game on your Negeo Pocket, you can then port it over to your DreamCast and play/fight with it as well. Another instance was that say you are playing an RPG on your DreamCast system. You can then "store" your important items and saved games onto your Negeo Pocket!

Back by popular demand, we have brought back the Top Ten charts from Japan. Expect the charts to be commonplace in Japan Now! in future issues! Here is what's going on in the land of the rising sun...

## Top 10 Current

1.) Vampire Savior - Sega Saturn - Capcom
2.) Shinseki Evangellion Koutetsu no Girlfriend - PlayStation - Gainax
3.) Tekken 3 - PlayStation - Namco
4.) Parasite Eve - PLayStation - Square
5.) Gran Turismo - PlayStation - SCE
6.) Kidou Senshi Gundam ~ Giren no Yabou - Saturn - Bandai
7.) Sakura Taisen 2 - Saturn - Sega
8.) Tail Concerto - PlayStation - Bandai
9.) Bio Hazard 2 - PlayStation - Capcom
10.) Play Stadium 3 - PlayStation - Banpresto

## Top 10 Most Wanted

1.) Dragon Quest VII - PlayStation - Enix
2.) Pocket Monster Gold - GameBoy - Nintendo
3.) Tokimeki Memorial 2 - PlayStation - Konami
4.) Brave Fencer Musashiden - PlayStation - Square
5.) Legend of Zelda ~ The Ocarina of Time - N64 - Nintendo
6.) Star Ocean Second Story - PlayStation - Enix
7.) Virtua Fighter 3 - Saturn - Sega
8.) Metal Gear Solid - Playstation - Konami
9.) Mother 3 - N64 - Nintendo
10.) Soukaigi - PlayStation - Square

## Top 10 All-Time Best Sellers

1.) Sakura Taisen 2 - Saturn - Sega
2.) Final Fantasy VII - Playstation - Square
3.) Tekken 3 - Playstation - Namco
4.) Bio Hazard 2 - PlayStation - Capcom
5.) Parasite Eve - PlayStation - Square
6.) Xenogears - PlayStation - Square
7.) Machi - Saturn - Chun Soft
8.) Grandia - Saturn - Game Arts
9.) Tactics Ogre - Super Famicom - Quest
10.) Gran Turismo - PlayStation - SCE

## Top Five Most Wanted Imports and Top Ten Japan:

### ECM



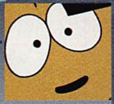
1) Dreamcast Console!!!
2) Radiant Silvergun - SS
3) Gem Fighter - SS
4) Castlevania: SOTN - SS
5) Raiden Fighters: Hell Diver - SS

### DANGOHEAD



1) VOOT (Virtual On Oratorio Tangram) - Dreamcast
2) Brave Fencer Musashiden - PS
3) Metal Gear Solid - PS
4) Castlevania: SOTN - SS
5) Tenchu 2 - PS

### EGGO



1) Final Fantasy VIII Demo - PS (oh yeah, and BF too)
2) Metal Gear Solid - PS
3) VOOT - Arcade
4) SD Virtual On Toys
5) Gem Figher - PS

## GAMEFAN FRUIT OF THE MONTH







### "BAKUSOU DEKOTOURA LEGEND - OTOKO IPPIKI YUME KAIDOU"

This new F.O.M. is indeed the weirdest game ever conceived. The object is to "race" other truck drivers and deliver the goods all over Japan. From boxes of live crab to underwear, the driver must make it to the destination in one piece in order to get paid. They've also thrown in drunk drivers, commuters driving crazy in their little Toyotas, and even (GASP!) rival truck drivers! "Hey! That driver just cut you off!" Well then.. just get outta your car and take care of things man-style! Beat them up and take their goods! ROAD RAGE!!! Just the kind of game Waka is into! Heh... Also, there's an "Edit Mode" that allows you to paint and, um, decorate your truck. "LET'S RIDE THE TRUCK AND GO FOR THE GOAL! WE ARE MEN!" (Taken from the game's strapline...) Boy, if these are the games Japan has to offer now, somebody wake me up when the Dreamcast gets here... ZZzzzZZ...

—Waka

# TOUKON RETSUDEN 3





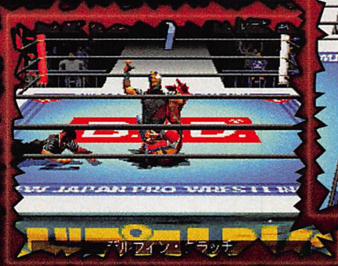

Tomy is back with a third installment of *Toukon Retsuden*, the Japanese hit wrestling series which has the competition in a sleeper hold. Though *TK3* doesn't feature all the familiar visages of wrestlers from the WCW or WWF, it does have wrestlers from the NWO. But familiar faces are not what this game is about over here (unless you recognize names like the Great Muta, Chono, and Jushin Thunderlyger), it's quite simply the best 3D wrestling game out. Of course it's an import which probably won't come out here, but if you're a wrestling freak or have a lot of buds to scream and talk smack to... this might be the game for you.

For those who've played *TR1* or *2*, the graphics and the engine of *TR3* are exactly the same. The wrestlers are still large and in 3D with gouraud shading and great animation, whereas the referee is seriously lacking in that department (he has a tendency to "skate" around the ring, *Gumby*-style). There's quite a bit of detail on the faces too; if you get worked in a fight, your wrestler's face will literally be a bloody pulp. The fans in the crowd are large and horrendously pixelly (hide the women and children, there's big pixels out there). As far as I could see, there's no way to adjust the camera, which can be a problem at times... especially when the ring or referee get in the way of the action.

And if you want moves, *TR3* has an extensive arsenal of grapples, bone-crushing throws, and submission moves (there are a TON of moves in *3*), some of which are tag team moves. My favorite is the Hijack Piledriver in which you hold your opponent in the piledriver position while your partner climbs to the top rope and pushes the poor guy's feet down as you piledrive him. Almost all the moves are labeled in Katakana, so if you can read that, you'll know what you're doing. If not, don't worry about it. *TR3* is fun. To illustrate my point, let's talk about the intricate grappling mechanics at work here. When you lock up with another wrestler, it becomes a game of rock, paper, scissors (circle beats triangle, triangle beats X, and X beats circle).

Action is fast and furious; you're able to play one player, two player (single or tag team), or even up to four with a multi-tap (woo hoo! Another multi-tap game. Call up the friends). This is the best wrestling game on the PlayStation graphically, moves-wise, and it plays great.

Grab a friend (or three) for some fierce, no-holds-barred wrasslin' action. Now it's time for me to put Dangohead in a submission hold and show him who's the boss around here (Ed's Note: Oh really?). *E*

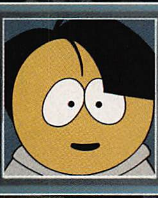




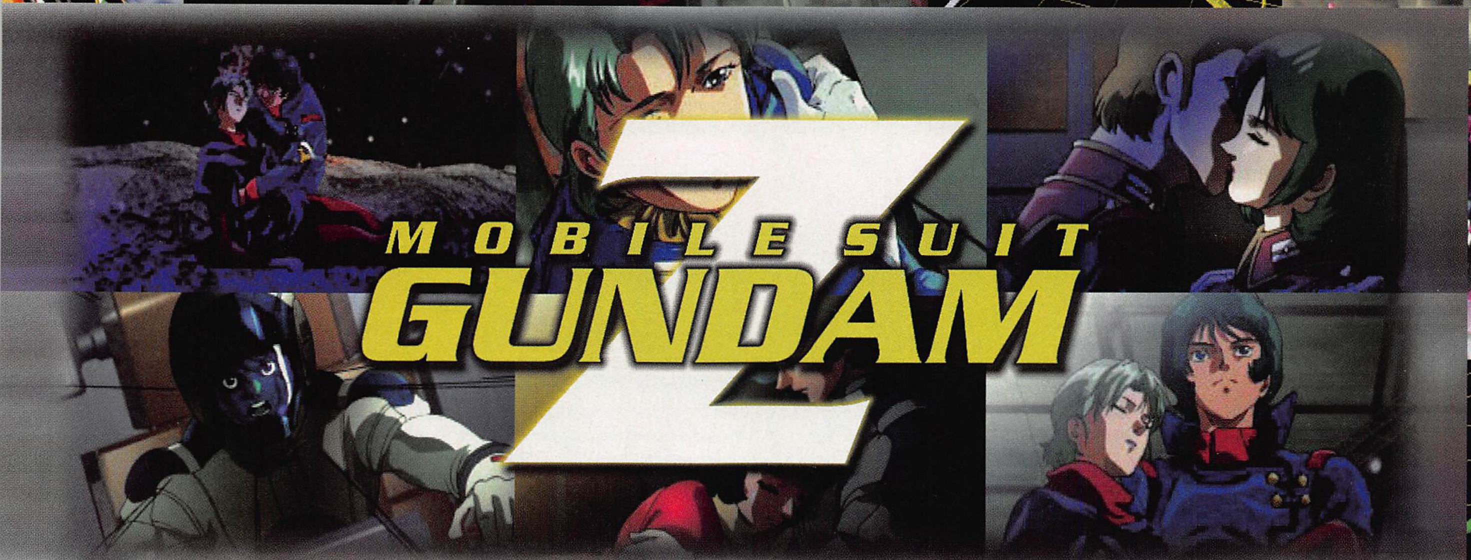
R REVIEW

PlayStation

| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER - YUKES | # OF PLAYERS - 4 |
| PUBLISHER - TOMY | DIFFICULTY - MODERATE |
| FORMAT - CD | AVAILABLE - JAPAN NOW |



**EGGO**
When you're NJP you're NJP for life!



# MOBILE SUIT Z GUNDAM

R REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - SA-SUNRISE

PUBLISHER - BANDAI

FORMAT - CD

# OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - NOW JAPAN



**DANGOHEAD**
"The only thing missing is the overpriced popcorn and soft drinks."







One of the best known anime, *Gundam*, (like most licensed video games), has yet to make much of an impact on the gaming scene (well, maybe big, but definitely not good). Ranging from above average (i.e. *Battlemaster* series, *Robot Wars*) to piss poor (most of the *Side Story*), I was wondering where *Z-Gundam* would end up, other than a likely trip to Fido's expansive collection of plastic, shiny frisbees (here boy...).

Based on the anime of the same name that takes place in the year 0087, it mainly follows the story of Kamiru Bidan, a young pilot who finds himself in a war against the Earth Federal Government. I say mainly because *Z-Gundam* comes as a two-disc set, one that follows the main character, the other disc looks through the eyes of Char Aznable, a teammate and mentor of sorts to Kamiru. As you proceed through the game, you'll be treated to several minutes of story-developing anime. While this is great for those fanatical *Gundam* fans, I'd rather rent the anime and watch it, rather than sit through it between battle sequences. Don't get me wrong, the anime sequences are done very well, as was the graphic quality of the game itself. When speeding through the confines of space, no slowdown was encountered, though stages with obstructions did show some breakup in polygon quality. All attacks, long and short range, have pretty cool weapon effects, though at times the explosions do become somewhat pixelated during gameplay.

With the rock solid visuals in the game, I was hoping for some great gameplay to back it up. And it's here that I should kick myself in the buttocks for conjuring such high expectations, as *Z-Gundam*'s playability leaves a bit to be desired. While you have free movement in those X, Y, and Z coordinates of 3D geometry, the battle sequences become a very basic floating game of tag. With two basic weapons, it's just a bit too boring, even though you're hurtling through space with thrusters blazing. Sure, there's hand-to-hand combat, a shield device to block attacks, a cool "escape" button for the transformable mechs, and even more playable mechs as you proceed through the game, but while the ideas and concepts of the mech fighting sequences sound great on paper, the glue to bring it together is missing. Maybe it's cuz I'm way too much of a *Virtual On* freak, that I was expecting the same high-concept gameplay tactics in this game. And while this is one of the few PlayStation games that uses the link cable for two-player battles, if the one-player battles are unexciting, then the only thing that the two-player mode adds is the trash talking, which is admittedly fun when you're pounding away at a crybaby like Eggo (waah!).









The sound and music are very well done, as the music comes straight from the anime. Battle sequences are done with great dramatic music, complete with the robotic grinding of gears as you move. With all the great music and sounds, there's only one track I have to complain about. The intro movie music gives me the willies, as repressed memories of Debbie Gibson music videos came crashing back to mind ("Electric Youth," somebody kill me... please).

So, what's the verdict? Considering that it's a *Gundam* game, it's not bad at all. But as a game, I don't think I could make it all the way through the rather tiring and tedious battle sequences. Still, if you're a *Gundam* addict looking for somewhat of an epic game, this is probably one you've been waiting for. But for those looking for a fast paced mech action game with loads of gameplay, you're probably better off with *Armored Core*, or *Virtual On*, as the only thing this game has loads of is anime. So sit back, relax, and enjoy the movie... err, game. *D*

# SPEED POWER GUNBIKE



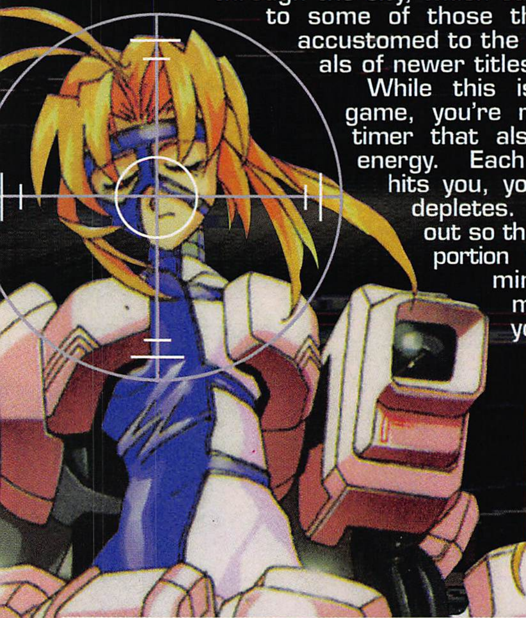


From the rather putrid *Macross VF-X* on the PlayStation to the mediocre *Macross: DYRL* (*Do You Remember Love?*), the transforming mech action genre is sorely lacking. And while *Speed Power Gunbike* isn't a great action game with stylized anime-mech transformations as it's selling point, it's decent enough to give some hope that developers are making strides into turning this nearly bankrupt genre into something worth playing. But don't get me wrong... decent doesn't mean it's all that good.

Take the transforming Mospeada Cyclone bikes from the third *Robotech* series with the settings and backgrounds from the *Bubblegum Crisis* anime, and you've basically got the idea behind this game. Set in an earthquake-ridden future of Japan, alien forces are invading and guess who's up to the job of defeating these hideous mechanical forces? You have a choice of three riders, all with variable attributes though those differences are of small consequence.



Graphically, the game looks quite nice, though that depends on if you like the new "hand-drawn polygon" look that's found in recent imports *Tail Concerto* and *Mega Man Dash*. Running at a decent 30 fps, it looks nice, though some break-up does occur in later levels. Pop-up is present especially when racing through the city, which can be an eyesore to some of those that have grown accustomed to the pop-up free visuals of newer titles.



While this is not a racing game, you're racing against a timer that also acts as your energy. Each time an enemy hits you, your timer/energy depletes. The game is laid out so that there's a racing portion where you face minor chump enemies standing in your way as you search for the correct path to the boss. Defeating enemies is quite simple as your vehicle can transform into three modes: (1) Bike mode allows the fastest speed, though one hit and you're thrown off your bike, (2) Robot mode allows you to bash through your enemies by running into them (your main means of attack) or using your gun weapons, and (3) Rally mode allows a unique synthesis of both Bike and Robot modes.

While initially the game plays pretty cool, it becomes tedious and even boring. All you really need do is ram into everything in Robot mode and you pretty much got it. Turning around and movement in Robot mode is almost atrocious, and I leaped for joy during the times I was dashing in Robot mode through tunnels while only hitting walls about three times. Suffice it to say, if the control was tightened up, I would definitely get into this game, rather than toss it into Eggo's Bargain Bin specials.

While the sounds and music are above average, it's not enough to save it from the lack of control and repetitive gameplay. What's especially humorous is that when you finally lose all your time/energy, the words "Anergy Empty! You All Over!" pop up. As if control issues weren't bad enough, we have to also deal with half-hearted English translation text. And that's what this game comes down to: While near the top of its genre, its nice game design and above average graphics mixed in with terrible control and empty gameplay elements place it close to being good, but not close enough to sniff that cigar.

***D***









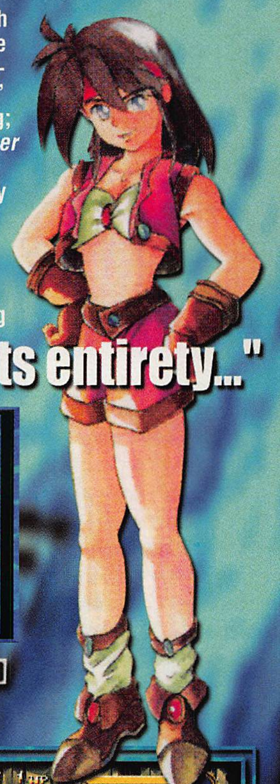


R REVIEW — PlayStation

| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER - SONY MUSIC ENT. INC. | # OF PLAYERS - 1 |
| PUBLISHER - SONY MUSIC ENT. INC. | DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE |
| FORMAT - CD | AVAILABLE - NOW |

**DANGOHEAD**
Thay neede bettah spelchekas...





GameFan RPG player Eggo will be sidelined for the rest of the month with an aggravated case of "Nintendo thumb." When questioned, he replied, "Yeah, it's an old injury... and after playing five hours in our latest game (Data West's *Brave Prove*), the thumb just said, 'I've had enough.'" Currently, the team trainer is treating the injury with ice to reduce the swelling; Eggo's status in next month's playoff game against Square's *Brave Fencer Musashiden* is listed as "doubtful."

I like *Brave Prove*. I just wish it didn't hurt to play it in long sittings. By "Nintendo thumb," I'm referring to soreness and swelling of the thumb from constant and vigorous manipulation of the d-pad. Calloused thumb veterans of hockey games may scoff at my "weak sauce" thumb, but *Brave Prove* really tests your endurance. Here's why: running in this RPG is done by double-tapping forward. And running is an essential part of RPGs, unless you like spending

## "Not only is it a fun, real-time action RPG, but BP is 2D in its entirety..."





An important aspect to finding secrets in *Brave Prove* is spotting cracked walls. When you see a weakened section of a wall, throwing a bomb at it will knock it down and open up new paths and rooms.

# BRAVE PROVE










## "One aspect which truly sets Brave Prove apart from other RPGs is dungeon size..."







60 hours finishing a 30 hour RPG. The lack of a run button is semi-forgiveable, but the double-tap is also used in attack combos and to cast magic as well.

Not only is it a fun, real-time action RPG, but *BP* is 2D in its entirety. While I won't go so far as joining ECM's band of 2D rebels fighting against the ever-expanding Evil Empire of 3D games, I throw my lot in with 2D lovers. *Brave Prove's* characters, backgrounds, and character portraits are all composed of painstakingly hand-drawn sprites. The fine craftsmanship and attention to detail in this title are a refreshing change from the mass of polygonal, camera-shifting games out there.

Fighting in *BP* is real-time, allowing you to choose between dodging enemies or killing them all. Repeatedly hitting the attack button will result in a swift, three strike combo, but incorporating pad movements with the attack button gives dashing attacks and greater swings. Later in the game, magic becomes a factor as you pick up elementals and learn spells, which are cast the same way as regular attack combos (pad and button presses).

The instruments used in *BP* sound very realistic for PCM and are very melodic. But the actual music score of the game is nothing to write home about. There'll be no lines to buy the soundtrack for this game.

One aspect which truly sets *Brave Prove* apart from other RPGs is dungeon size. In this game size does matter, because unless you have a built in automap in your head, you'll probably get lost in the HUGE dungeons of *BP*. A dungeon will look the same everywhere you go and forks will lead to more forks and doors till you can't tell where you came from. My kingdom for a pile of breadcrumbs.

Right now, *Brave Prove* looks like it'll remain as an import only. But if Data West decides to bring this title over, it's definitely worth checking out. We'll keep you posted if it comes out here. *E*

R REVIEW

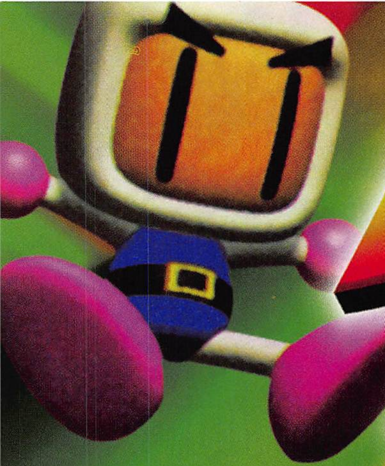
PlayStation

DEVELOPER - DATA WEST
PUBLISHER - DATA WEST
FORMAT - CD

# OF PLAYERS - 1
DIFFICULTY - MODERATE
AVAILABLE - NOW JAPAN



**EGGO**
What do you mean they ate the bread crumbs?



# BOMBERMAN HERO













Hudson's back with another *Bomberman* for the N64. Right off the bat, let's get this straight: this is a one player *Bomberman* with no multi-player action. Sorry Bomber-fiends, the dream of a 2D *Bomberman* isn't happening here. Instead, *Hero* features pseudo-3D worlds to explore. Not truly 3D like *Mario 64*, *BH's* worlds are "2D with depth" (3D graphics, but you're trapped in a plane). The camera angle can't rotate 360 degrees; instead, the camera moves about 30 degrees left, right, or up but reverts back to the original setting when you let go of the button. Even worse, the levels are small and confined—you can reach the exit in a minute if you tried to. Other problems plague *Hero* such as draw-in and terrible music.

But before you write off *Bomberman Hero* as a *Mario* clone which didn't make it, the game has many positive aspects. There are many levels within levels and worlds within worlds. Don't worry about finishing this one too soon, especially if you try to collect everything. The classic elements of *Bomberman* are present in this game: throwing bombs, kicking them, chain reaction explosions, and past characters (including the dinosaur!). A new move is available as well, holding down the "B" button will cause Bomberman to swing his arm around in circles like an under-armed Baseball pitcher. When you release the button, he throws out three bombs in a spread. Familiar platform moves are there as well, such as climbing, jumping, and the ever important hanging.

Gameplay in this 3D platformer is just like *Mario 64*—a big scavenger hunt, trying to collect all the items on a level. Familiar *Bomberman* powerups are there such as the one which increases the blast radius of your bomb.

Instead of being confined to just walking, Bomberman has new toys to play with as well: the BomberCopter (helicopter blades that come out of his helmet), the BomberJet (jetpack), the BomberSlider, (snowboard), and the BomberMarine (underwater propeller). These gadgets are given to him in an elaborate "*Voltron*-like scramble down the launch tunnel scene." Every level which uses one of these toys plays completely different: the BomberJet level is like a first person shooter on a track (somewhat like *Space Harrier*).

My final thoughts on this latest *Bomberman*? Once you get over the lack of a multi-player mode, it's a pleasant diversion and entertaining for *Bomberman* lovers, even though it's not a "real" *Bomberman* (multi-player bombfest). Gameplay-wise, it's a very basic platform game with no surprises. Yet in the end, I have this inexplicable fascination with *Bomberman* games; they're cute and fun... except for that PlayStation aberration <shiver>. *E*














**R REVIEW**

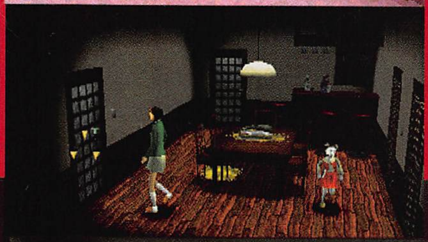
NINTENDO 64

DEVELOPER - HUDSON
PUBLISHER - HUDSON
FORMAT - CARTRIDGE
# OF PLAYERS - 1
DIFFICULTY - MEDIUM
AVAILABLE - JAPAN NOW



**EGGO**
Hey where did everybody go?

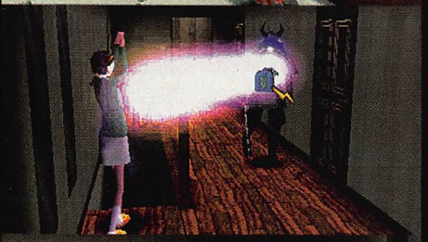














# CLOCK TOWER GHOST HEAD



Human Entertainment is back with *Ghost Head*, a sequel to *Clock Tower*, and an action/adventure game similar to *D*, *Resident Evil*, or the first *Clock Tower*. In fact, *Ghost Head* looks and plays just like the first *Clock Tower*, running on the same engine. In case you missed it, expect to play your way through a Hollywood-like horror movie. Creepy camera angles, squeaky doors, peering into dark closets, etc. This game is best played at night with a large group of friends to "fake spook" you every chance they get. Or you can play it alone in the dark.

To add to the overall experience, it's fully Dual Shock compatible, meaning that it's analog and it shakes. *Clock Tower Ghost Head* is one of the few games that uses the Dual Shock creatively: if something brushes by your character, you'll feel a quick jolt on one side of the controller. Or elsewhere, when a piano starts playing itself, the controller shakes in time with your excited heartbeat.

The graphics are gouraud shaded polygon characters walking, running, and stalking around on 2D rendered backgrounds. The camera angle is fixed, so the game can set up eerie angles and closeups to scare you. Music is almost non-existent, because the programmers feel silence is more powerful than music. Not to say that *Ghost Head* doesn't have music; but most of the time will be spent in silence, with music or shrill sounds used at key moments to add tension to the atmosphere.

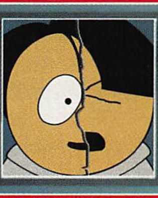
All these chilling effects and literal shocks are excellent effects... but how does it play? Gameplay is made up of finding visual clues through mouse-sweeping (searching every inch of the screen with your cursor like in *Broken Sword* or *Blazing Dragons*). The game comes down to finding keys and triggering events more than solving puzzles.

To complicate things and double playing time, your character, Yu (a gentle, Japanese schoolgirl) has an evil alter ego, Shyou (a rude, crude version of Yu). As Shyou, you can wield weapons, such as guns, which Yu would never use (she also kicks people in the huevos). On the other hand, Yu must resort to finding weapons among her environment such as candlesticks and vases. But the differences between the two don't just end with fighting. Rooms will have doors and items which can only be open or found with just one of the two personages. In other words, you're forced to explore every room twice (once with each character). Possession of an item switches you back and forth between your happy, go-lucky self and the foul-mouthed, bratty other. And every time an event is triggered, it's time to visit every room again twice. This isn't my idea of a good time, which is why *Ghost Head* doesn't really work for me. *E*

R REVIEW

PlayStation

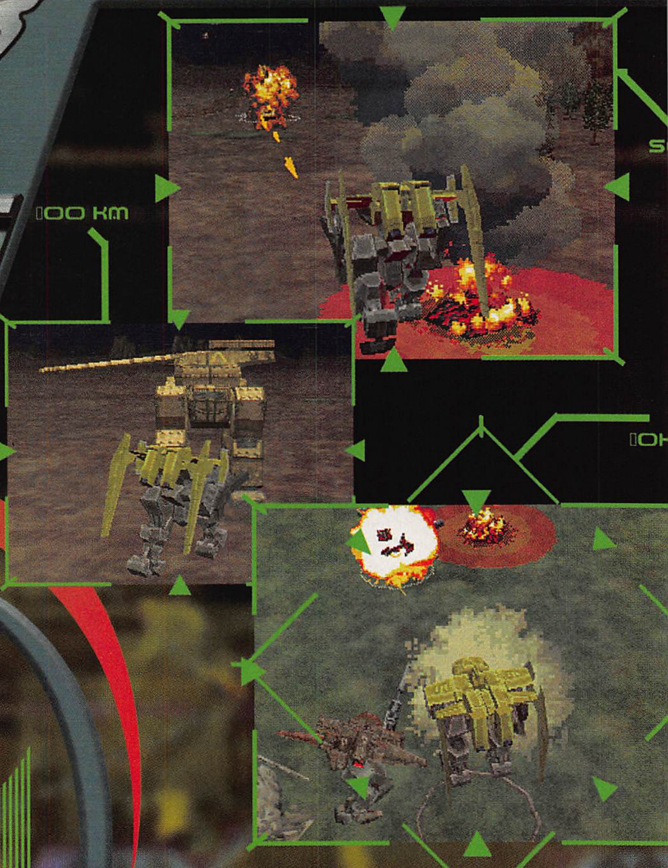
| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER - HUMAN | # OF PLAYERS - 1 |
| PUBLISHER - HUMAN | DIFFICULTY - HARD |
| FORMAT - CD | AVAILABLE - NOW JAPAN |



**EGGO**
Eek! A (PlayStation) mouse!

Lt. ECM

# GUNGRIFFON II





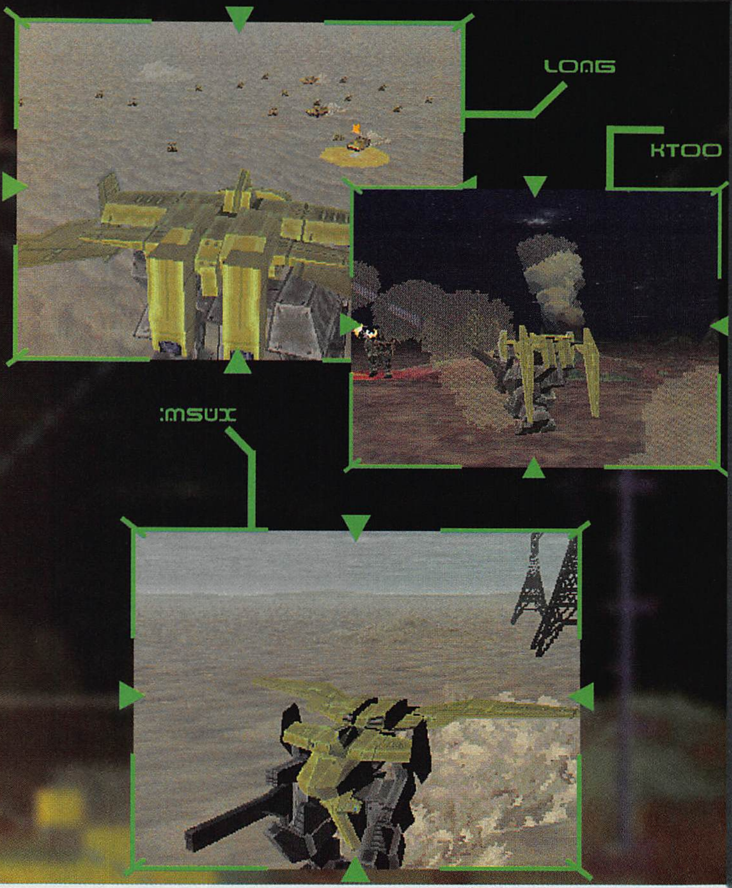

The original *Gun Griffon* was one of the most impressive early titles for the import Saturn, which received a domestic release some months later. Now, those of you that have been reading the mag since I came on board (seems like ages now, <sigh>) may recall the review for *Armored Core* on Sony's PS. I ranted and raved how it would be terribly difficult (if not impossible) for something to come and top it. Well, now that I've played *GGII* extensively, I can finally comment on how the Saturn's response to that PS assault has fared.

As per the first *Gun Griffon*, the story throws you into the midst of conflict on a global scale. Different countries band together in various unions for economic and defensive reasons. However, the world stage is very unstable and the various factions have fallen into war with each other—as good a reason as any to climb into multi-ton mechs and smash one another (as if I really needed a valid reason).

As you may expect, *GGII* plays a lot like its predecessor. Placing you at the helm of a very large, very destructive mech (is there any other kind?), you're out on a series of missions to restore peace and stability to the region (yeah, after reducing everything to rubble). While the controls are a bit daunting at first, once you get the hang of accelerating, jumping, and toggling through weapons, let the world tremble at your unfathomable might. Anyone that's played the first game will be right at home this time out as the controls are an exact match for the first game: Jumping, shooting, accelerating, etc. are all mapped to the same buttons this time out. Oh, and of special note pertaining to the control scheme, the handy *Virtual On* Dual Stick peripheral is compatible with those games. So all ten of you now have another game to use it with ('tis kinda cool, what with one joystick being the look control, and the other being the movement control).

As with the control, gameplay hasn't changed much, although it's clear that this one is much more difficult than the first (you'll hear no complaints from me about that, however). Missions range from the standard mech-game stalwarts like search-and-destroy to the protect-the-convoy variety. Thankfully, after a play or two, each level objective becomes pretty clear and the language barrier does not provide too much of a hindrance (though it does kinda hurt the atmospheric speech throughout the levels that adds much to the game and can actually be of great assistance). Wait till you get a look at levels five and six—they sure as hell didn't make this one easy (I feel compelled to stress, again, that this game IS NOT easy).

What has GameArts managed to do with the engine since the first chapter in the *Gun Griffon* saga? Well, to be honest, not much. Strangely, the game appears to run at a lower resolution than the first. Whether it's lower-res textures or a lower overall screen res, I'm not sure (I'm banking on the latter). However, once you take note of the new motion captures for all the mechs, you'll see where most of the effort went. Everything is









now animated much more smoothly than it was the first time out. There also appears to be more detail on the various vehicles, but the lower res tends to wash it out and you may miss it if you don't look for it specifically. The only other negative is the annoying presence of a great deal of pop-up. We're talking "one minute you're there, and then <poof>, you're gone" type pop-up. Something I'd expected in the first *GG*, but was hoping would be remedied by the 3rd or 4th generation of software (not eliminated, but at least lessened). However, the gameplay is hot enough that I won't complain too much about the first generation graphics... well, maybe a little.

Sound effects are straight out of the first *Gun Griffon* as well. Cannon shots, missiles, etc. all sound amazingly like the first one (probably because they *are* from the first one). As for music, well, this is certainly an interesting mix: Steve Vai meets the NY Philharmonic Orchestra. No really. Some levels feature 'classical' pieces while others have screaming guitars and the like. Not sure who decided that, but it makes for some, uh, diversity (the diplomacy lessons are paying off quite nicely, thank you very much).

One big negative was the fact that the intro is no longer the CG glory found in the first (which supported the rather under-used MPEG-I card for the console). Instead they went the real-time route... boooooo!! Why in the world would you do that when the video quality of the original is still on par with the better PS video on the market? Why, GameArts, why?!

Oh, one last tidbit: This game makes use of the Saturn link cable. Yep, it's not just a legend, the cable actually exists. The last time I saw one of those things was back when the un-inspired *Gebockers* showed up (ugh). With it you can engage in co-operative missions and it makes the game, pretty much, a lot easier than it was. Just keep in mind that if you buy the game and want this feature you need to purchase the slightly more expensive link cable-included version (bow to the power of the obvious).

That about does it for *Gun Griffon II*. A solid, if graphically uninspiring mech 'sim' (I really have to wonder how anything that doesn't actually exist can be 'simulated'—guess that's why I don't make games... yet). Now GameArts, about those 64 (or is it 128?) bit *Silpheed* and *Alisia Dragoon* sequels? -ECM

REVIEW

SEGA SATURN

| | |
|---|---|
| DEVELOPER - GAMEARTS | # OF PLAYERS - 1-2 |
| PUBLISHER - ESP | DIFFICULTY - HARD |
| FORMAT - CD | AVAILABLE - JAPAN NOW |



**ECM**
Time for a tune-up.




## FIO



NAME: *FIO GERMI*
AGE: *22*
ORIGIN: *GENOVA, ITALY*
HOBBY: *COOKING*
DISLIKES: *HOT FOOD*

## MARCO



NAME: *MARCO ROSSI*
AGE: *25*
ORIGIN: *IDAHO, USA*
HOBBY: *PROGRAMMING*
DISLIKES: *RESTAURANT WINDOW SHOPPERS*

## ERI



NAME: *ERI KASAMOTO*
AGE: *20*
ORIGIN: *HIROSHIMA, JPN.*
HOBBY: *NOT MUCH!*
DISLIKES: *NOT BEING ABLE TO DRIVE ALONE*

## TARMA



NAME: *TARMA ROVING*
AGE: *25*
ORIGIN: *HOKKAIDO, JPN.*
HOBBY: *MOTORCYCLES*
DISLIKES: *SKINNY PEOPLE*

All I have to say is 'WOW.' Who would have thought this far into the Neo's life span we'd still be seeing **any** games, much less games of this caliber. And stunningly and heart-stoppingly amazing as it may seem, it's **NOT** a fighting game. Nope, no siree, this is a bona fide, hard core side-scrolling action shooter. Fans of the first *Metal Slug* (and when it comes down to it, who isn't?) will be in 2D, side-scrolling, animation-choked, hand-drawn, blast-'em-up heaven, <whew>! This is the type of game the Neo was made to play–to hell with all those 'me too' fighters (Shidoshi can have Blue Mary and all those other misfits), this is where it's really at! Even after all the games that we pronounce as "2D insanity" this game fits into a class completely its own–and this from a '24-bit' system… Bigger, Badder, Better? Yeah, I'd say so!

Anybody that's been reading this magazine for the past 6-8 months knows that I'm something of a shooter fan. And when they're this achingly good, it's not hard to see why (though some of the miscreants around here still don't get it at all–the fools!). Simply put, this is the best game I've had the pleasure of playing this year (yep, more-so even than *Grandia*). While this may not make it through the holiday season as my number one game, without question, as of this writing, it is (if it had made it out last year, it may have been my game of the year). Right now a couple of you are probably ready to summon the men in white suits, but hear me out before you make that call…

**"...Who, for the love of all that is great in gaming, needs polygons when games like this exist?!?!"**

As you peruse the shots of this supremely amazing game, you may be saying to yourself, "Gee, what's so great about this? No polygons anywhere? Where's the light-sourcing? How can this game be any fu-", now before you go one step further (and before I lodge my fist in your polygon-loving face), try this on for size: **THAT'S THE POINT!!!** Who, for the love of all that is great in gaming, needs polygons when games like this exist?!?! I want to know at what exact point in time, games like this became 'obsolete' and 'old fashioned', 'cause I sure as hell missed that boat, big-time. ARGHHHHH!!!! Alright, I'm OK… I can finish the review… heh, heh (…as Kid Fan administers the electro-shock therapy).

For those of you that missed the first *Metal Slug* (heretics!), you took control of the single most kick ass soldier to walk a battle field since *Contra: The Alien Wars* made an appearance on the SNES (yes, *Hard Corps* was good too, but…). In fact, back when *Contra: LOW* dared to show its hideous countenance, many pointed to *Metal Slug* as the only game left to carry the once great moniker of '*Contra* clone' (since that dark day, I've been calling games of this ilk *Metal Slug* clones). Anyhow, you journeyed through 6 levels of side-scrolling, shooting and platforming action, hell-bent on the destruction of all that dared animate for even a split second. This was one of the titles 'true gamers' would boast that they could beat with but a single credit (no continues). The most 'hard core' (yours truly and El Niño included) would take that as far as being able to beat the game on a single life… now that was true skill. And the day it found its way to Sega's Saturn with the accompanying 1 meg RAM




















cart was a great day that will be revered down through the ages. However, time marches on–which brings us to the meat of the review.

Whereas *Metal Slug* truly showed just how formidable a sprite-handler the Neo could be, it took another couple of years and *Metal Slug 2* to truly take it over the top. Never have you seen 2D power of this magnitude. The visuals in this game are so flusteringly awe-inspiring that I needed 10 bottles of Visine after playing through it the first time because I refused to blink, lest I miss a single frame of maddeningly hot animation–this is what true 2D power is all about. The artwork is phenomenal (and that's what it is: art-work)–the animation is easily the most incredible I've **ever** seen in a video game and the detail level is staggering; hell, even the themed music from the various stages fits like a glove. A Michelangelo of the video game world, if there ever was one.

Graphics aside, all who crave the might of what once was in the 16-bit days, need enlist *now.* Fantastic shooting gameplay with just the right challenge (on default difficulty) and more than enough for those that aspire to a higher plane of gaming goddom. Shoot, jump, juke, jive, and blaze your way through stage after stage of superior gameplay. From the bazaars of the Middle East to the vaults of the pharaohs, this experience is what gameplay is all about. Need I say more... OK, I will. You can also choose from four different warriors this time out: Two male and two female (ah, isn't equality grand?). As well, there is a smidgen of new weapons to be had with the laser being the best thing going since the smart bomb. And finally, there is of course the new vehicles: the trusty Metal Slug tank; the Harrier; the battle suit: and of course the almighty camel! Oh, and keep an eye out for the fire-ball-totin' gentleman sprinkled throughout each level.

Even with all that having been said, let me just make one more note before I leave you on your quest for the nearest *MS2* cart or arcade machine (CD flavor is on its way!): This game's sense of humor is fantastic. From the way the enemy will laugh at your sorry hide after they gun you down, to the ending that was, how shall I say, 'inspired' by a certain Hollywood movie that goes by the initials of ID4. This game is as fun to watch as it is to play–not that you'll **ever** catch me watching...

Negatives? There is but one: While the first *Metal Slug* suffered from an acute case of slowdown, the sequel outdoes it by the same order of magnitude as the visuals. There are points herein (especially in 2-player mode) where the game will drop so many frames, that you can actually count each one individually. And while the lesser man (or woman) may scoff at the Neo's ability to *barely* keep running through it all, the true gamer will simply see it as a reminder of the technology behind such an awesome experience (the Neo is over 8 years old). A bit annoying? Sure, but you won't hear me crying about it.

So where do you go from here? If you're like me, you've already left the house in search of the nearest, used Neo setup you can find. If that's out of the question, then get ye to a nearby arcade (and if they don't have it, pester them till they get one). All the true gamers left out there (the few, the proud), owe this game to themselves as a reminder that all is not well with the current 3D infatuation (alas, even SNK has tread this ugly path). The sad, ugly truth is that we're just about at the end of the road for games like this. What am I to do...?























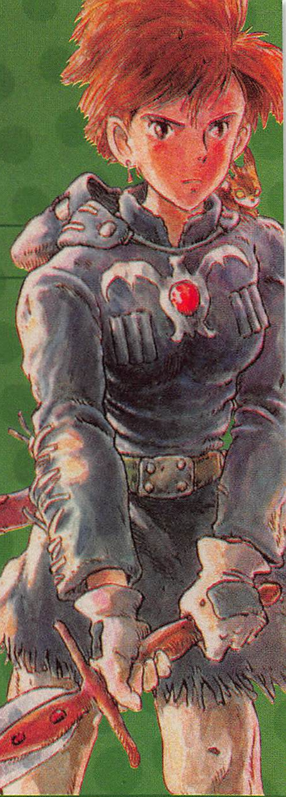
R REVIEW

DEVELOPER - SNK
PUBLISHER - SNK
FORMAT - CART (362 MEGS)

# OF PLAYERS - 2
DIFFICULTY - MODERATE
AVAILABLE - NOW JAPAN



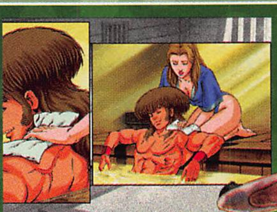
ECM
The end of an era...

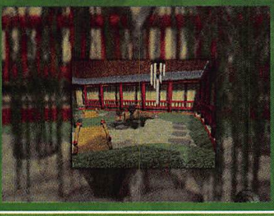


## Takeru : Letter of the Law — Software Sculptors

Buichi Terasawa (whose Cobra is also covered this month) brings his trademark "lady killer" hero and evil space criminals to a computer near you in the interactive adventure game Takeru: Letter of the Law. Takeru reminds me a lot of games such as Mansion of the Hidden Souls and D. You move around in a pseudo-3D world, solve a few clues here and there, then watch the story unfold in hand-drawn cutscenes. And, in the tradition of those games, movement can be very annoying sometimes—getting to a specific point in a room can be downright frustrating at certain times. Also, a great deal of the game is cutscenes, so if you don't really get into the story, or cutscenes annoy you, then this really isn't the game for you. However, if you like these kind of interactive adventure games, then you might want to give Takeru a look. The requirement the game puts on you to learn a bit of Kanji, as well as the ability to pick multiple options when faced with a problem, are cool little features that make this game different than the rest of the genre.

- Shidoshi







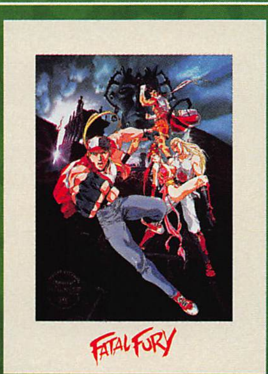
## Page One - Features of the Month

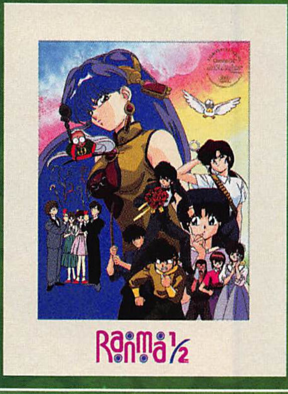
### Simitar Entertainment — Chroma-Cels

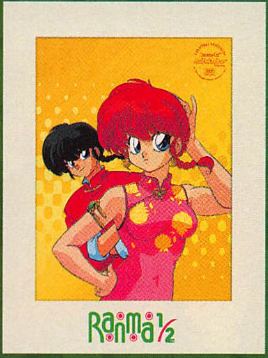
If you haven't already checked out the first titles (BubbleGum Crisis and Slayers) from Simitar Entertainment / Ani-Magine's new Chroma-Cel line, then I seriously recommend you go out and do so. As I talked about two issues back, Chroma-Cels are new anime collectables that reproduce the look and feel of anime cels for an outstanding low price ($14.95). If you've ever wanted to collect cels, but can't afford to, or you just want some cool anime goods from your favorite series, Chroma-Cels are just what you're looking for. Ani-Mayhem promised new titles at regular intervals, and here we have the next two : Fatal Fury, and fan favorite Ranma 1/2. One of the new features with this second batch of Chroma-Cels is dual-colored logos: Ani-Magine has started incorporating two colored foil stamping, making logos (such as Ranma's) look ever better and stand out more. Also, you may notice that the Fatal Fury Chroma-Cel, an image which has been used for the cover of the Fatal Fury movie, actually shows the entire image (it's always been cropped when used as box art). I've been talking to Jeff Linton over at Ani-Magine for quite some time about Chroma-Cels, and he assures me that they have some big plans for future Chroma-Cel titles. While I can't really say what titles I've heard mentioned, I'll just say that they will continue to produce some awesome Chroma-Cels, and that one of the titles they are looking at doing is going to make me VERY happy. <hehe> All Chroma-Cels are limited editions of 5000, so be sure to pick one (or more) up for yourself before they're all gone. For a reasonably low price, you can get yourself an awesome looking piece of anime art worthy of being displayed for all to see and envy.

- Shidoshi

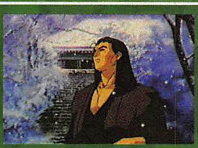



### Crimson Blade — Pioneer Anime





A few issues or so ago I talked about Crimson Blade, a new title from Pioneer Anime that was a combination of clips from their awesome The Hakkenden series put together with techno music. Interesting concept, to say the least, and lo and behold, after a while I received a copy of Crimson Blade: The Mix in the mail. CB:tM features the "pulsing grooves" of Magic Alec's "Moloko Plus"—while I can't say that I've ever heard of him, his music is supposedly making the rounds in those disco rinks all around Britain. This is a cool little video, which fans of either techno music or the Hakkenden may want to check out. However, I'm not sure if I'll ever watch it again—while it's cool the first time around, I don't know if I could find a reason for multiple viewings. Still, a cool idea that worked very well (and would be a good extra to put onto a Hakkenden DVD collection <hint> <hint>).

- Shidoshi



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## Tenchi Muyo the Move 2 : The Daughter of Darkness

**Pioneer Anime**







Tenchi the Movie 2 : The Daughter of Darkness tells the story surrounding two new characters, Yuzuha, a demon from the dark realm, and Mayuka, Tenchi's ... daughter? That's who she says that she is, and the entire group doesn't know what to think. Who exactly Mayuka is, and what her connection to Yuzuha is, are mysteries that are revealed as connections from the past are brought back to light. At only 60 minutes, TtM2 isn't quite the epic event that the first Tenchi movie was. Instead, it's more like a new episode from the OAV series ... a really good new episode from the OAV series. And come on - Mayuka is just SOOO kawaii (I would have liked to have seen her become a regular, which she only sort-of does). I have but one problem with TtM2 - a few of the English voice actors are different this time around (don't forget, Tenchi is one of the few dubs that I actually love). While the new voices aren't bad, they just aren't the same. Remember how last issue I was talking about how Tenchi Muyo in Love! and Ghost in the Shell were the best of anime DVD? Not any more. I thought I knew how good anime could look on DVD, but boy was I wrong. TtM2 is, in a word, shocking. The picture quality is just unbelievable, better than I could ever expect to see on my home television (I mean, it looks like the original cels have been somehow stuck into my TV). Throw that in with 5.1 Dolby Digital surround sound, dub and sub both on one disc, and you've got an awesome experience. But Pioneer decided that just that wasn't enough, so they threw on a huge Tenchi encyclopedia, with more information and details about the Tenchi world than you could ever imagine. If this title doesn't convince you that DVD is the future of anime, then nothing ever will. TtM2 is definitely good enough of a movie to purchase, Tenchi fan or otherwise, but it's also the perfect show title to prove to your friends just how cool DVD really is. Big kudos to Pioneer for pulling out all the stops on this title, but folks, this is only the beginning. <dreams> - Shidoshi



| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| DVD | AN A+ | VO A | MU B+ |
| S/D | CH A | ST B+ | OV A- |





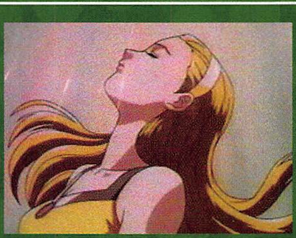


## New Kimagure Orange Road

**ADV Films**









When you think about classic anime idols, who do you think of? Lynn Minmay, obviously. Priss, no doubt. But somewhere on that list, one name that is sure to be near the top is Madoka. Even before I knew anything about Kimagure Orange Road, I knew who Madoka was. Madoka, and the rest of the KOR gang, are back for a completely new KOR story. Based on the 1994 Shin KOR novel published by Jump Books, this is the tale of two Kyosukes, one from 1991, the other from 1994, and an accident which sends both of them spinning through time. Kyosuke from 1991 is thrown into the future, and while dealing with getting a look at what will happen to him three years down the road, he must figure out how to get home again. New KOR is a fabulous title, and is a must for any anime fan. The story is interesting and engulfing, with characters and situations that never disappoint. I especially liked the music - I've always been a piano buff, and Madoka's "Kyosuke #1" is reason enough to purchase the soundtrack. Watching New KOR was like being back in the old days, back when I was still relatively new to anime, getting the chance to experience some of the classics for the first time. Not that I don't like newer anime, mind you– it's just that some of the older titles have a certain "feel" to them that many of the newer series lack. New KOR is a sincere, emotional, romantic trip through time, one I very much enjoyed being along for. - Shidoshi

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| VHS | AN A | VO A+ | MU A |
| SUB | CH A | ST A- | OV A |





AnimeFan rates each anime title that we cover in one of six different areas, with a rating of A+ to F-. Please be aware that the actual letter grade is just as important as any + or - attached to it - a grade of B+ may mean a quality B title, but it is still not as good as an A-.

AN - Animation quality. Covers such things as quality of colors used and how smooth/choppy animation is.

CH - Character design. How interesting/boring the characters are, both in look and personality.

VO - Voice acting quality. Dubs are compared to other dubs in terms of quality, NOT the original Japanese voices.

ST - Storyline. Self explanatory.

MU - Music. Self explanatory.

OV - Overall score. Final grade for the title, which is determined by an average of the grades for the other five categories.

Send comments, letters, artwork to:
AnimeFan
5137 Clareton Drive Suite #210
Agoura Hills, CA 91301

Or : shidoshi@gamefan.com

## Ruin Explorers — ADV Films





Ruin Explorers - those brave men and women who risk life and limb to explore ... well, ruins, from lost civilizations, and plunder all of their treasures. Our story centers around two such people, Ihrie (the brave and brash swordswoman), and Fam (the annoyingly cute female magic user who hasn't exactly perfected her arts just yet). Ihrie is on a quest to obtain an ancient source of extremely powerful magic, so that she can remove the curse that's been put on her. So, she sets off, with Fam in tow, and the two adventurers run into a whole lot more than they bargained for. This is a fun little show, and if you like silly fantasy titles like Slayers, you're sure to like this one. The cast of characters, both good and bad, and interesting and likable (good to see Muttley get work again <heh>). The dub is rather good by dub standards, with Fam being the only voice that bothered me (cute and squeky English voice actors usually bother me more than their Japanese counterparts). This is one of those titles that I probably wouldn't have picked up normally, but enjoyed enough to look out for future volumes. Life will go on if you don't see it, but that's no reason to pass it up. - Shidoshi

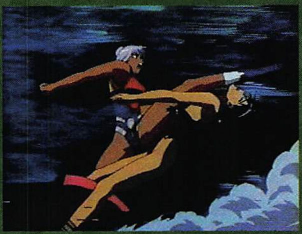
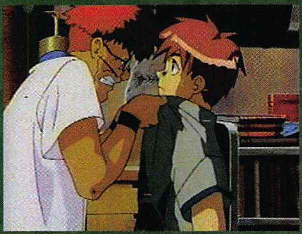



VHS | DUB

AN B | VO A- | MU B+ | CH B+ | ST B | OV B+

## Landlock — Manga Ent.




The evil overlord Sana'ku is determined to gain and control the power of the wind, and use it to rule the lang and conquer any who would oppose him. But one person stands in his way - a young boy named Lue'der, who possesses the red eye, one part of the key to obtaining the wind's mighty powers. Together with his sister and Aga'lee, Sana'ku's adopted daughter, they must stop Sana'ku's dreaded plan before it can be realized. Landlock is what I would consider an average title. First of all, it's damn confusing. There are a lot of points and facts in the anime that aren't exactly explained, either when they need to be or ever. So you end up sort of going along for a ride, where you have a slight idea where you are but don't fully realize what's going on around you. There also seems to be more characters than they need, so people like the bug guy (his name escaped me at the moment) seem to be a bit out of place with not much to do. While Landlock is connected to Masamune Shirow, this isn't really one of "his titles." From what I've heard, he did the initial characters designs, and that's it. It's kind of obvious, though, as this doesn't "feel" like a Shirow anime (no political examination, no deeply complex social structures). Landlock isn't horrible, but it really isn't anything special, either. - Shidoshi

VHS | AN B- | VO C+ | MU B

DUB | CH B- | ST C+ | OV C+

## Oldies but Goodies

### All Purpose Cultural Catgirl Nuku Nuku — ADV Films



Ryunosuke and his father, Kyusaku, are on the run ... from his mother. Seems she is one of those "Evil Corporate Overlords," and wanted Kyusaku to build a robotic war machine. Kyusaku steals the android body, but after he and Ryu get into an accident, he makes a strange decision. He puts the brain of Ryu's pet cat (who was badly hurt in the crash) into the android body - and Nuku Nuku is born! An adorable anime girl who does cute cat-like things every now and then? The creators had me specifically in mind whne making this series! But seriously, APCC Nuku Nuku is an awesome series ... and more than a little like Project A-ko (another fantastic anime), now that I think about it. You can't help but fall for the lovable Nuku Nuku, and cheer her on as those mean Office-Lady Warriors try their best to destroy her and her happy little world. You'll laugh, you'll cheer, you'll be a changed person. For that reason, APCC Nuku Nuku is this month's AnimeFan "Oldies but Goodies" top pick. Nyaaaaan! - Shidoshi



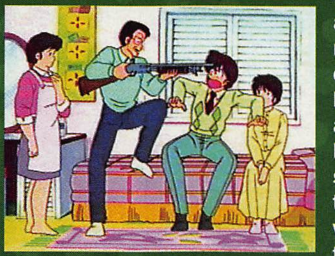








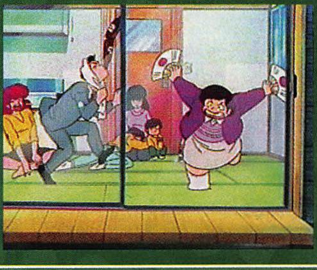
## Maison Ikkoku : She's Leaving Home — Viz Video



Kyoko's parents just won't leave her alone – they have concocted yet another dirty scheme to get their daughter to leave Maison Ikkoku and move back home with them. And as if that wasn't enough for our hero Godai to worry about, the "cute and innocent" Kozue has BIG plans for him ... as in meeting her parents! Will Kyoko leave Maison Ikkoku once and for all, and will Godai be trapped by the sweet Kozue's deadly "ready to be kissed" maneuver? If you thought the fact that I'm not a huge DragonBall fan was bad, wait until you hear this:I do NOT like Ranma 1/2. However, that could be due to my dislike for Takahashi anime in general –while I love the Urusei Yatsura manga, the anime has never really impressed me. And yet, I really like Maison Ikkoku – it's a silly little comedy that's just bizzare enough to be exactly the kind of thing that I love (I could almost see this as a live-action sitcom, in the tradition of 3rd Rock). There aren't so many characters that the show gets rediculous (<cough>Ranma<cough>), the episodes are light hearted and fun, and ... well, it's just plain good. My only problem with the dub? I think they even dubbed the dog ... and it's just WEIRD. But no matter, even with a strange sounding dog, Maison Ikkoku is definately reccomended. - Shidoshi

VHS | AN B | VO A- | MU B
DUB | CH B+ | ST B+ | OV B+



## Space Adventure Cobra — Urban Vision

And you thought anime these days was weird? Take a look at some of the older anime that's out there–well, Space Adventure Cobra, for example. This is the story of the infamous space pirate Cobra, his run in with the beautiful and deadly Jane Flower (you know, of the three Flower sisters, who are destined to become queen of their home planet, which is currently flying around in space). Jane asks Cobra for protection from the Space Mafia (the evil crime organization that Cobra isn't too fond of), and for help in her quest. Of course, Cobra isn't going to say no to such a beautiful girl, so off he goes to battle the Space Mafia, and eventually confront his arch enemy, Crystal Boy. Space Adventure Cobra is a perfect tribute to all those wonderfully cheezy late 70's/early 80's sci-fi flicks - sort of Barbarella meets Flash Gordon, with a dash of Heavy Metal mixed in. I love that kind of stuff, and I'm an old-school anime buff, so of course I enjoyed Cobra. Sure, it looks a little silly when compared to some of today's anime, but that's the charm of it, and not only does it have a cool story, it's got Cobra ... I mean, come on, he's the man! If older anime turns you off, you might not get into this title. However, if you simply like good anime, old or not, go on a ride through space with Cobra. - Shidoshi

VHS | DUB | AN B- | CH B | VO B+ | ST B | MU B | OV B







## Yotoden the Movie : Wrath of the Ninja — US Manga Corps.

Nobunaga Oda, world renowned Japanese warlord, is on a mad quest to take over the entire country. Standing in his way is one person - the young female ninja Ayame, last of the Kasumi Clan. Joining forces with the renegade ninja Sakon, and the expert spearsman Ryoma, the three go on a quest to stop Nobunaga from conquering all of Japan. I remember first reading about Yotoden WAAAAAY back in the day that Animag was some magazine covering "that Japanese cartoon stuff." Well, it wasn't until years and years later that I finally got to check out Yotoden, and I was glad that I did - it's an interesting mix of ninjas and sorcery brought together in a very interesting package (not quite as good as the Hakkenden, but still worth watching). YtM is one of those "OAV turned movie" kinds of things - like what the Macross Plus and Macross II movies were. They take the OAV episodes, chop them up, throw in some new scenes, and call it a movie. Personally, I don't know if I like the idea - the addition of new footage is cool, but putting it in a shortened version of the series just rubs me the wrong way. I would definately recommend Yotoden to anyone out there, so my suggestion is this: watch the original OAV series, then check out the movie. - Shidoshi






VHS | DUB | AN B | CH B | VO C- | ST B+ | MU B | OV B-



# Anime News Service . . .

Star Wars Manga



### Oh my God! More A!MG...

Seems like Kami-sama has indeed been listening to my pleas (or at least reading AnimeFan lately). One of the new titles coming to Japanese satellite channel WowWow is "Ah! Megami-sama: Chichai'tte Koto wa Benri da ne", which roughly translates to "Ah! My Goddess!: Isn't it Convenient that They're All Tiny?" (I just love that name <hehe>). This new series will take Kosuke Fujishima's popular characters and put them in an all new SD (super deformed) series. I've currently got Waka on the case as far as getting copies of the series, and be assured that when (NOT if) I do get it, I'll let you all know what I think. HOWEVER ... I've heard talk about an Ah! My Goddess! movie. Yes, a movie. Supposedly, it's currently in the production stage, so we won't see anything about it for a while (and no one I talked to had even heard of it). If it's not true, all my hopes and dreams will be shattered. If it is true—then it's about time! <sob> All I know is that it's said to be about Keiichi getting kidnapped, and our favorite goddesses going to save him.

### Marvel Calls it Quits, Dark Horse Declares War

Marvel Comics is canceling their X-Men and Spiderman manga titles some time soon—they've solicited them up through June already, so they may end in June, July or August. The exact reason is unknown, but sales for these titles have been slow by Marvel's standards, which may be due to supposed disappointment from customers and retailers over the titles. While things didn't go so well for Marvel, Dark Horse will be bringing us a four-part Star Wars: A New Hope manga adaptation. Luke, Leia, and Han go anime? This I HAVE to see. The first issue hits in early June, so keep an eye out for it.

### Disney Does Anime—Update

Mononoke Hime's current theatrical US release is set for the second quarter of 1999. Even more interesting is that Disney has hired Neil Gaiman to do the English "adaptation" of the script. Gaiman states that his goal is "to remain faithful to the story while providing a translation that a non-Japanese audience will be able to follow." I'm interested to see how this ends up turning out—while the idea of Disney dubbing Miyazaki bothers me, if it has to be someone, and they're going to remain faithful and do it well, then I guess I can't complain too much. And as I reported before, Buena Vista Home Video will be releasing the Kiki's Delivery Service in September 1998. As well, Laputa: Castle in the Sky will be coming out as "The Castle in the Sky" sometime in the first quarter of 1999. Both titles will be direct to video, but should be supported by Disney's zillion-dollar marketing division. Seeing as how McDonald's spent a lot of money to acquire rights to produce Disney tie-ins, could we see Kiki's Delivery Service Happy Meals, complete with a plastic "Kiki on broom" plastic toy which drives forward after being pulled back, or little stuffed Jijis? Creepy idea, but I have to admit such a thing would be cool. <heh>

### New Releases

The good news? ADV Films will be releasing Tekken the Movie, giving you both episodes of the Tekken anime on one VHS cassette. The movie will come out sometime in the fourth quarter of 1998 for $19.98. The bad news? Tekken the Movie will be only released as a dub. As well, ADV will be releasing the Slayers movie in August. Pioneer will be releasing the second El Hazard OAV series. "El Hazard 2: The Magnificent World" will come out as two volumes, each of which will contain four episodes (not a bad deal, if you ask me). The first volume should hit around July 14th, and the second around August 25th. Also in August is the long-awaited release of Bastard! DVD wise, they will be concentrating on working on the titles they are doing for Viz, such as the first Ranma movie, the Nightwarriors titles, and the Fatal Fury movie. Central Park Media / US Manga Corps, however, have decided to seriously take on the DVD anime market in the near future. Look at all of these titles that they have coming up: Area 88 Part 1 (Sept), Ayane's High Kick (Oct), Big Wars (June), Gal Force: Eternal Story (Aug), Grave of the Fireflies (Oct... YES!), Harmaggedon (Aug), Iria: Zeiram (June), Silent Service (Oct), Urusei Yatsura: Beautiful Dreamer (Sept... YES!), and Voltage Fighter Gowcaizer (June). BIG hand for CPM/USMC for putting their full support behind this new format. Non-DVD wise, they have two big titles on the way: Revolutionary Girl Utena, and Ping Pong Club (which is said to make South Park look like Davie and Goliath). Oh, and remember how I (or, should I say, Waka) said that it was a shame that the first YuYu Hakusho movie wasn't out here in the US to go with the one released by US Manga Corps? Well, it soon will be, thanks to Anime Works. Look for it in early June. - Shidoshi

## He's mean! He's green! He's ... GODZILLA!

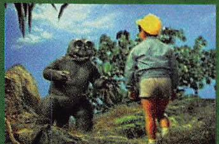


"I'm the king of the world! ...see my movie."

Seeing as how the release of the new Godzilla movie is only a short time away (from my writing this), and a couple of companies are gearing up for this new movie by re-releasing some of the older Godzilla titles, I thought I'd give everyone's favorite mutant monster a little coverage this month.

### Simitar Entertainment





"Whoa... Godzirra has gone SD!"

Simitar is releasing a number of older Godzilla titles on both VHS and DVD (of course, I got the DVD versions). Simitar has digitally remastered the image and soundtrack for both versions, and let me tell you, the DVD versions are indeed a sight to behold. The VHS copies contain Godzilla trailers and video art, and the DVD has additional materials, such as two different soundtracks (original or new Dolby 5.1 surround), both fullframe and widescreen versions of the films, an interactive Godzilla trivia game, as well as four different Godzilla screensavers for those PC owners who have DVD-ROM drives. These titles are great for any Godzilla fans, but hard-core fans will HAVE to own the DVD copies. Titles available: Godzilla: King of the Monsters, Godzilla vs. Mothra, Godzilla vs. Monster Zero, Godzilla's Revenge, and Terror of Mechagodzilla.





"Hey, Godzilla? Uhm, no offense, but you're supposed to be fighting Ghidra, not hopping around like a pansy..."

### ADV Films

Not to be left out, ADV has released Destroy All Monsters on VHS in widescreen format. Available for the first time on home video in the US, the monsters of the world have come under the control of alien invaders. DAM is a all-out battle with some of the toughest creatures ever in film, bringing together the biggest and baddest from the Godzilla films: Mothra, Rodan, Gorosaurus, Anguirus, and Manda, just to name a few. What will happen when a host of creatures runs rampant upon the Earth, and will mankind decide to destroy them all for good? - Shidoshi







# Top 5 Winners

That's right anime fans, it's time to speak up and let us know what you're watching! List your top 5 favorite anime and send it in, attention Anime Fan! As always, we wouldn't dream of asking you to go to all the trouble of writing, mailing and stamp-licking for nothing: We'll enter you in our bi-monthly drawing (one entry per person, per month) for the 20-inch Eva model pictured below and Evangelion 1 thru 6!! Two additional prizes will be given away each month. 1st prize - a full set of Burn Up W and a Burn Up W T-shirt and 2nd prize - a full set of Devil Hunter Yohko courtesy of AD Vision!

### Grand Prize
Owen Anderson
Chicago, IL

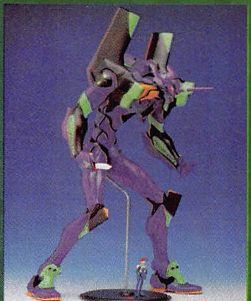
**Top Five**
1: Nausicaa
2: Laputa: CitS
3: Arcadia of my Youth
4: City Hunter
5: Video Girl AI

### First Prize
Larue Binder
Los Angeles, CA

**Top Five**
1: Evangelion
2: Burn Up W
3: DH Yohko
4: BA Toshinden
5: Shadow Skill

### Second Prize
Peter Boonheng
Sycamore, IL

**Top Five**
1: Evangelion
2: Dangioh
3: Wicked City
4: Gowcaizer
5: Ninja Scroll



## Win Your Very Own, Personal EVA

To register simply send your top 5 anime picks along with your name, age, and address to: Anime Fan Top Five, 5137 Clareton Drive Ste. 210, Agoura Hills, CA 91301. Grand Prize: EVA Model (EVA Unit 01) and episode 1-6 of Evangelion. 1st Place prize: complete set of Burn Up W anime and a T-shirt. 2nd place prize: set of Devil Hunter Yohko anime. For a free AD Vision catalog write to: AD Vision 5750 Blintiff #217 Houston, TX 77036. No purchase necessary, void where prohibited, my balogna has a first name... it's H-O-M-E-R...

A.D.V. FILMS

## Your Top 5

**Top Five**
1: Evangelion
2: Tenchi Muyo!
3: DragonBall Z
4: DH Yohko
5: Ninja Scroll

"Your Top 5" is determined by reading all of the Top 5 lists that come in each month, and figuring up which got the most votes. "My Top 5" is Shidoshi's Top 5 for this month (not limited to only those titles covered this issue).

## My Top 5

**Top Five**
1: Oh My Goddess!
2: Tenchi the Movie 2
3: New KOR
4: Grappler Baki
5: Dragon Ball Z

## AnimeFan's Generically Titled Letters/Fanart Section

Just got the latest issue of the magazine, it's different somehow, but in a good way. Anyway, awesome AnimeFan section man, good job! I hold the same view of DVD as you do, now if AD Vision would see the light and release Evangelion and Burn Up on DVD... Does anyone even buy those out-dated Laser-Discs anymore? Oh, yeah, I'd rather have a disc the size of my bloated cat instead of a disc I can fit in a CD jewel case! <smile> And what's up with AD Vision not bringing out the movies of Evangelion?! Don't those movies wrap-up the story? I want to see who dies and who gives birth dammit! Keep the Anime News Service page too, it's cool having a whole page on anime in general, when some other gaming magazines just report on games.

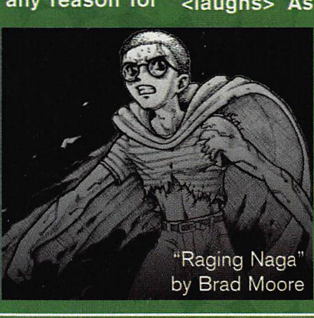
**Matt Hershberger**

I completely understand why some of the anime companies have decided not to get into the DVD market as of yet. It's still a small, infant market, especially for anime companies who play to a smaller market in the first place. That said, there is no one out there who wants companies like AD Vision and AnimEigo to start releasing some of their titles on DVD more than I do. It's a crime that we won't have things like Evangelion, Plastic Little, Oh My Goddess!, BubbleGum Crisis, and other such titles anytime soon. Once the DVD market gets larger, though, I can't see any reason for the rest of the "hold out" companies not to jump in—it's the perfect format for anime. The worst thing is the wait. <sigh>

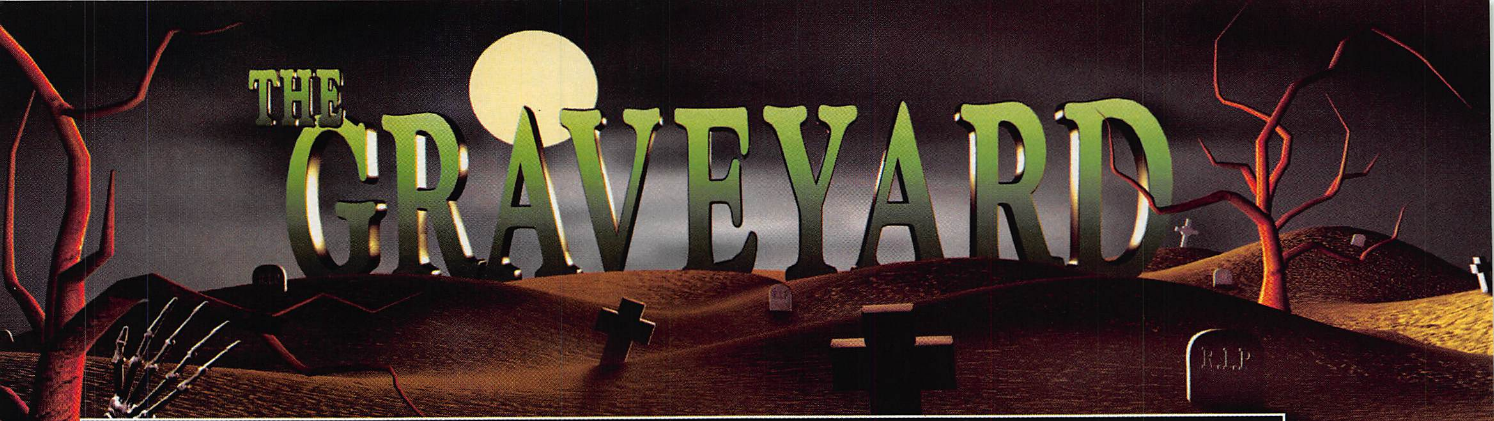
Hey Shidoshi! Well, I got the new GameFan... and I love your new AnimeFan section! (Looks like they gave you a good amount of space to work with!) It's got a good design to it... cool colors... looks great! I like the idea of it having a small fan art and letters section. Heh, to tell the truth, the AnimeFan section is probably the magazine's BEST pages. And it looks like it's only going to get better! Keep up the good work!

**Brad Moore**

Thanks for the kind words, as well as the fanart. That has to be the first piece of "Shidoshi fanart" that I've ever received. <laughs> As far as the size of AnimeFan, it'll hopefully stay at six pages every month. The higher-ups made the mistake of allowing me to have those eight pages for that one issue, then realized my scheme to take over the entire magazine. Maybe I could talk them into giving me my own magazine... <wanders off, pondering>



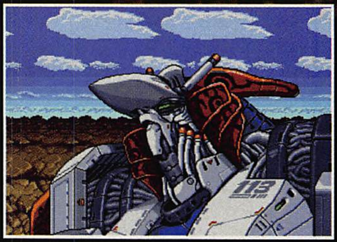
"Raging Naga" by Brad Moore



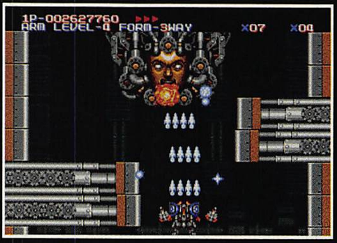

While wandering through the misty confines of the Graveyard this month, I stubbed my toe most violently on a headstone that was half-encrusted with the signs of age and wear; muck, filth, and all manner of obvious neglect. As I diligently scrubbed the stone clean, it became clear that I had stumbled upon one of the greatest games from the 16-bit era (at least in my sleep-addled mind): *MUSHA* by Seismic—one of the greatest shooters of all time. Upon close inspection, I also noticed the presence of another much-ignored... oh wait, it's just Shidoshi. And it appears he has our second selection for the month: *Pocky and Rocky*.

# M.U.S.H.A

METALLIC • UNIFRAME • SUPER • HYBRID • ARMOR







As one of the most difficult and long-standing video game trivia questions ever, *M.U.S.H.A.* stands for *Metallic Uniframe Super Hybrid Armor*. An awesome title for sure, and (for a change) even superior to its original import name of *Aleste*. Coded by the now-blissfully-lost-in-*Puyo-Puyo*-land developers over at Japan's Compile, *M.U.S.H.A.* heralded the beginning of what would become known as the Great Shooter Deluge of the Early Nineties (at least that's what I refer to it as—stay tuned for the novel and movie coming soon!).

A vertically scrolling shooter (top-to-bottom scrolling for the geometrically deficient), *M.U.S.H.A.* set the standard for many a hard-core gamer as to what a 16-bit shooter could be. See, in the 'next-gen' era most shooters are merely arcade ports, now that consoles have the power to replicate 99% of them flawlessly. When 16-bit ruled the roost, though, shooters couldn't rely on arcade perfect ports (my head still reels when I think of the 16-bit 'ports' of *Raiden*... yipe). Instead, they had to be done from scratch, generally, and cater to the specific hardware they ran on. *M.U.S.H.A.* was a prime example of what could be done with the Genesis hardware in the early going, and could even compare quite favorably throughout its life cycle.

Replete with high color graphics (well, as high color as 64 colors go—61 for the anal), searingly fast scrolling, and even a healthy dose of "impossible to do on Genesis" effects. Noteworthy was the scaling effects in stage three where you pilot your mech suit over a deep ravine with enemies scaling in and out of it as they're destroyed. The ravine itself had layer upon layer of stunning parallax and conveyed depth like no other game to that point. Even the end-of-stage 'warping effect,' notorious on the Amiga computer, put in an appearance—this was hot stuff back in the day.

The story itself has you going up against the usual impossible odds in your super-powered mech battlesuit. The opening story is conveyed through an incredible (for the time) cinema sequence that even put to shame Compile's PC Engine CD and Sega CD efforts (*Spriggan* and *Nobunaga's Ninja Force* among them). Even the ending was pretty hot—just make sure you set it on hard to get the 'real' ending, though.

Suffice it to say, this game still ranks among my favorite shooters ever. Perhaps even the best one of all time. If I could just convince Compile to take a shred of the mountain of cash they've built with the puzzling antics of *Puyo-Puyo* on a new shooter, I could die a happy man. As it stands now, they're more content doing *Puyo-Puyo* RPGs...blech. ***ECM***
















# POCKY & ROCKY






Strangely enough, I have *Pocky and Rocky* to thank for the first time that I ever got paid for playing a video game (I did a strategy guide for it for a company that never got anywhere). I was a much younger Shidoshi back then, back when life was simpler, and the $100 I was paid for playing the game seemed like a whole lot of money to me. Times have changed, systems have advanced, and yet the years have done nothing to tarnish this classic game.

Storyline: Hace tiempo, los "goblins" (duendes) de Nopino se alborotaron, sin embargo, Pocky... whoops, hold on. Wrong language. <coughs> So there's this Japanese priestess named Pocky, and she's just kicking back in her shrine one day, drinking her tea and thinking to herself, "Gee, life sure is boring. I wish some goblins would go on a rampage or something." Just then, Rocky the Raccoon (who just happens to be a Nopino goblin), rushed up to her. He tells her of a strange incident that has occurred: All of his fellow goblins have lost their minds, and are now on a mad rampage around Japan! (Ironic, don't you think?) So Pocky and Rocky head off to try to stop the goblins, and find out who is responsible for this whole mess.

Chances are you may never have played this game before, for the simple fact that it looks and sounds just like a game for younger kids. However, that couldn't be farther from the truth. Think of *Pocky and Rocky* as a sort of cute version of *Ikari Warriors*, with an adorable, very Japanese-esque charm. The game is set in a slightly-angled overhead view, and one or two players must battle their way through a variety of landscapes. And when I say variety, I do indeed mean just that—each stage has enough different locations and play elements to them to keep you interested throughout the entire game.

However, *Pocky and Rocky* is one of those few games that has aged very well—the game is still outrageously fun and challenging, and the graphics and music are still very good and completely tolerable. I got just as much enjoyment from this game playing it today as I did so many years ago, and if that isn't the sign of an extremely well-crafted video game, doggonnit, I don't know what is. *Pocky and Rocky* is perfect proof that your old, "outdated" systems can still hang with today's fancy-schmancy 64-bit jobbies. If you own *Pocky and Rocky*, I suggest that you go find your copy, dust it off, and give it another go. If you don't, then get out there and comb those used game shops and garage sales! This is one title that any serious gamer should have as part of their collection. Oh, and this one was for the SNES-for those that weren't there the first time... **S**


















# HOCUS POCUS

HOCUS POCUS

break the brainless bond
break the brainless bond of contrived codes
and trivial tricks and enter the world of
dangohead and spud's...




hocus pocus

hocus pocus

hocus pocus

hocus pocus

hocus pocus

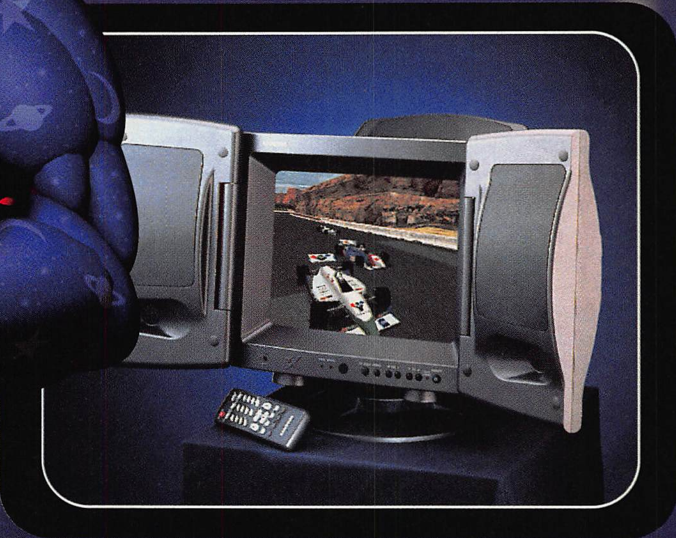
hocus pocus

hocus pocus

hocus pocus

hocus pocus





## ENTER

ENTER cool stuff

THE GAMEFAN
HOCUS POCUS GIVEAWAY!

cool stuff cool stuff

GXTV is the world's first video game TV with hyper-amplified sound and graphics. Enhance the thrill of gaming with adjustable speaker doors, stereo surround sound and a 15-watt sub woofer. Plus, the intense screen graphics will make you feel like your head's right inside the game. GXTV is also a 181-channel, 13" stereo TV with two A/V inputs, stereo headphone jack, backlit remote control and tilt/swivel stand. So whatcha waitin' for? Send in those codes and maybe you can win one of these GXTVs for yourself!

## GRAND PRIZE winner

A GXTV!

## FIRST PRIZE winner

VIEWPOINT
GAME OF YOUR CHOICE

## SECOND PRIZE winner

POCKET GAMEBOY

## THIRD PRIZE winner

1-YEAR
SUBSCRIPTION
TO GAMEFAN

# VAMPIRE SAVIOR

VAMPIRE SAVIOR

# NEED FOR SPEED 3

NEED FOR SPEED 3

PlayStation

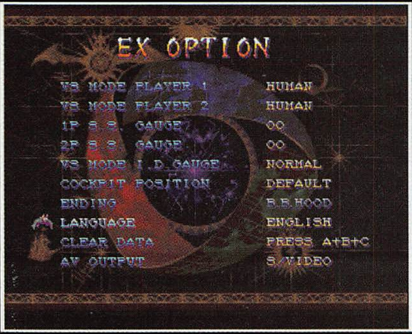
## Vampire Savior (SS Import)

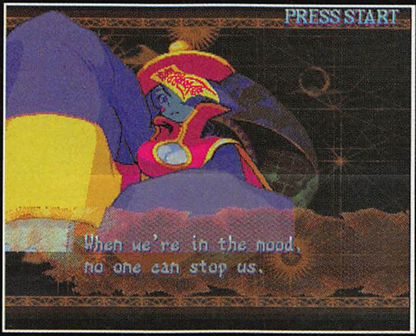
EX Menu
Alas, for those that haven't seen the glory of this import game, get it and try out these pretty cool codes.

EX Options:
You must beat the game once on any level without losing. Then go to the title screen, higlight Options, and hold L and press Start. You will get a special menu where you can toggle options that include S.S. Guage, Ending Select, S/Video or RGB, and Language, which allows you to play in English!

Dark Gallon/Dark J. Talbain
Beat the game with Gallon, then at the character select screen, hold L, Start, and press X & Y, or A & B buttons at the same time.

True Bishamon
Beat the game with any character without losing or continuing. Also, beat everyone using EX finishers and get the top score. Then after beating the final character (Jedah), you will face Orobo. Finally, at the character select screen, highlight Bishamon and hold L and Start and press any button.





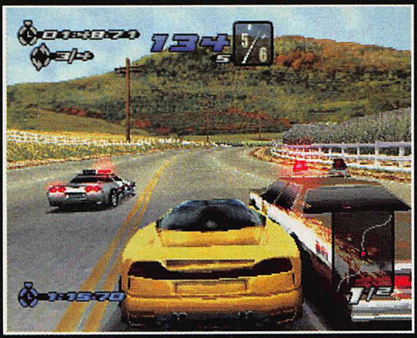

Need For Speed 3: Hot Pursuit
On the road of life, there are some drivers that need to get out of your way. Thankfully, NFS3 gives you the button to blow away bad drivers... literally.
Enter either one of the following codes on the screen prior to the loading screen:
POWER HORN: START+SELECT+L2+R1
When you're near a car, beep your horn to make him flip out of the way
INCREASE THE CAR WEIGHT: SELECT+SQU+X
Bump into any car to knock it out of the way

## Foreign Police Officers

Begin a race in Hot Pursuit mode. Like before, these codes are to be executed after pushing START to finalize the race, and before the "Loading" screen appears. These codes will make the cops and race announcer speak a different language.

German: UP+L1+R2
Spanish: DOWN+L1+R2
Italian: LEFT+L1+R2
French: RIGHT+L1+R2





# CONGRATULATIONS TO THIS MONTH'S WINNERS!

CONGRATULATIONS winners

The mighty Monitaur seeks the finest cheats, secrets and tips known to humanity, and we need them from YOU!! We'll look over all the codes you send and award a magnificent Grand Prize every single month! Remember, no cheap codes from previously-published US magazines! Winners will be drawn each month and displayed in the only place where cheaters prosper. (Current subscribers who win a subscription will receive a one-year extension.)

grand prize winner:
**Blackerotica@**
via email

first prize winner:
**Andrew Kim**
Hollywood, CA

second prize winner:
**Dgrundjr@**
via email

third prize winner:
**Dominique Jared**
Madison, WI

# SEND YOUR CARDS AND LETTERS TO:

SEND cards letters
mail mail mail mail

Hocus Pocus
5137 Clareton Drive
Suite 210
Agoura Hills, CA 91301

# KOF '97

## KOF '97: (SS Import)

**Hidden team and characters**

If you know this game pretty well, and you thought Iori and Leona were evil, the following code enables you to play more gruesome versions of Iori and Leona as well as the hidden Orochi team.

**Play as Orochi Iori**

At the Character Select screen, highlight Iori then hold START and press Left, Right, Left, Right, Left, Right, Left, Right, Left, Right, X + A.

**Play as Orochi Leona**

At the Character Select screen, highlight Leona then hold START and press Up, Down, Up, Down, Up, Down, Up, Down, Up, Down, Y + B.

**Play as New Orochi Team**

Enter the Orochi Leona code, then return to the character section screen, hold START and press Up, Left, Down, Right, Up, Down, X+ B.







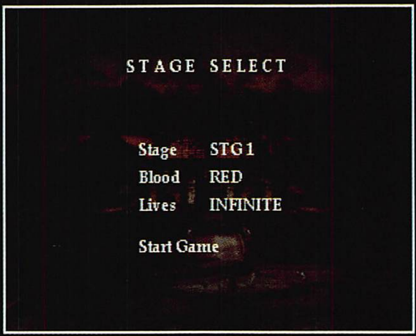



# HOUSE OF THE DEAD

## House of the Dead

**Debug Mode**

To pick the level you wish to start at, the number of lives, and even the color of blood, when you are on the main option screen where you can choose between Arcade mode, Saturn mode, etc. Press L, R, R, L, L, R buttons. You should hear a jingle, then hold the L & R buttons, choose a mode and press "start." You should come to the debug menu. (Note: The Japanese version may not give you the option to change the color of the BLOOD.)







**Secret Characters**

To use Sophie and one of the female researchers, hold the L & R buttons at the character select screen in the Saturn Mode, and press UP, DOWN, X, Y, Z. You will know the code was entered right if you hear a sound.




# ONE

## One:

**Debug Menu**

Enter the password "Heybuddy" and the cheat code screen will appear. This screen lets you choose what level you wish to start at, where in the level, infinite health, and all weapons.



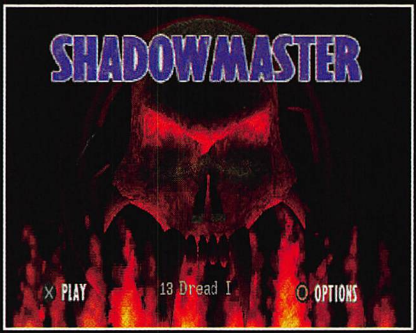

# SHADOWMASTER

## Shadow Master

**Invincibility and Level Select**

Start a new game, go to the first room, and kill the two monsters inside. Now, stay inside the room and enter the codes: Invincibility: Press L1 + L2 + R1 + R2 + X. Level Skip: Press L1 + L2 + R1 + R2 + Triangle. Exit the level and when you return to the main menu, you will be able to select your level.





## Playstation Codes

**ALIEN TRILOGY**
Cheat Mode
At the PASSWORD screen, enter 1GOTPINK8C1DBOOTSON.
Now you have access to the Cheat Menu.

**ADIDAS POWER SOCCER**
Dream Team
Prior to starting the match, press L2 + R2 + □ + X simultaneously on the Select Screen. Continually press the buttons until the name of your team changes to "Dream Team".

**BLAST CHAMBER**
Infinite Lives
At the main menu, press □, ⇦, □, ⇨, O, ⇩, O, ⇧. A confirmation sound will ring and when you start a game in "Solo Survivor" mode, you won't lose lives when you die.

**BLOOD OMEN: LEGACY OF KAIN**
Replenish Life Meter:
At any time, during gameplay, press ⇧, ⇨, □, O, ⇧, ⇩, ⇨, ⇦
Replenish Magic Meter:
At any time during gameplay, press ⇨, ⇨, □, O, ⇧, ⇩, ⇨, ⇦

**BUST-A-MOVE 2: ARCADE EDITION**
Another World
Enter R1, ⇧, L2, ⇩ while "PRESS START" is flashing. In PUZZLE MODE, you will see the Another World option.

**CARNAGE HEART**
Manual OKE control
During battle, push Select to bring up the options, then press Select 11 more times. The last option will change to "Action"; highlight this new option and change it to "Manual", and you'll be able to control your OKE during battle with the following commands:

⇧/⇩ - forwards/backwards
⇨/⇦ - turn right and left
Δ - jump
O - duck
X - fire main weapon
R1 + □ / Δ / O - change mech

If there are allies in battle, you can press L2 to become one of your allied mechs!

**CODENAME: TENKA**
All Weapons:
When the game is paused, hold down L1 while pressing Δ, R1, Δ, □, R1, O, □, □. When you release L1, all weapons will be available.
Stage Select:
When the game is paused, hold down L2 while pressing O, O, □, Δ, R1, □, Δ, O. When you release L2, you will have the option to skip levels.

**COMMAND & CONQUER**
Weapon Cheats:
Don't want to build an Advanced Comm or Nod Temple? Enter these codes, while game is paused, to access strikes:
Ion Cannon: ⇨, ⇩, ⇦, ⇦, ⇩, ⇨, ⇨, ⇩, ⇦, X, □, Δ
Air Strike: ⇨, ⇩, ⇦, ⇦, ⇩, ⇨, ⇨, ⇩, ⇦, X, □, O
5000 Credits: ⇨,⇩, ⇦, ⇦, ⇩, ⇨, ⇨, ⇩, ⇦
Open Map: O, O, O, ⇧, ⇩, O, □, R1, O, O, O
Covert Operations:
Enter COVERTOPS at the PASSWORD screen. Now you have access to the Covert Operations.

**CONTRA: LEGACY OF WAR**
Enter these codes at the TITLE screen:
Access All Weapons: L2, R2, L1, R1,⇧, ⇩,⇩, ⇧. Change weapons, during gameplay, by lying down before selecting weapon.
Infinite Continues: L1, R2, L1, R1, ⇦, ⇨, ⇨, ⇦
Stage Select: L2, R1, L1, R2, ⇦, ⇨, O, □, R2, L2
Hidden Game 1: L2, L1, ⇦, ⇨, R1, R2
Hidden Game 2: R2, R1, ⇨, ⇦, L1, L2

**COURIER CRISIS**
Level Codes:
Level 1: EFLCIFCGKJ
Level 2: IFLCIFCCKI
Level 3: MFLCIFCOKJ
Level 4: AFLCIFCKKJ
Level 5: FHCLFIGCJL
Level 6: FLCLFICCIL
Level 7: FPCLFIOCJL
Level 8: FDCLFIKCJL
Level 9: KFLCIFCGII
Level 10: OFLCIFCCII
Level 11: CFLCIFCOIJ
Level 12: GFLCIFCKIJ
Level 13: FFCLFIGCJJ
Level 14: FJCLFIOCJJ
Secret Characters:
At the PASSWORD option, enter:
Alien: XFIFTYONEX
Gorilla: SAVAGEAPES

**CRASH BANDICOOT 2**
Ten extra lives
Before entering the "Bear It" stage, you'll see a small polar bear at the front of this entranc.e Hit the polar bear (using the flying body drop attack) five times for ten extra lives.

**DYNASTY WARRIORS**
Playable bosses and hidden characters
Zhuge Liang - Finish the game with Guan Yu, Zhou Yu, Zhao Yun, and Zhang Fei.
Cao Cao - Finish the game with Xiahou Dun, Dian Wei, Xu Zhu, Lu Xun, Taishi Ci, and Diao Chan.
Lu Bu - Beat the game with Zhuge Liang and Cao Cao.
Sun Shang Xiang - At the title screen, press ⇦, ⇦, ⇧, ⇩, Δ, □, L1, and R1.
Nobunaga - Beat the game with Lu Bu. Then at the title screen, press □, ⇧, Δ, ⇩, and O.
Toukichi - Finish the game with Nobunaga and then at the title screen, press ⇩, ⇩, ⇨, ⇧, O, Δ, R1, and R2.

**FIGHTING FORCE**
Cheat Menu
At the main menu screen, press and hold ⇦ + L1 + L2 +□. The words "Cheat Mode" should appear and when you enter the Options menu, you'll find

a stage select and invulnerability options.

**FORMULA 1 CHAMPIONSHIP EDITION**
In GRAND PRIX mode, enter codes at EDIT DRIVER screen.
Big Wheels: LITTLE WHEELS
The Apocalypse: CATS DOGS.
Then change weather to RAINY
Bonus Tracks: BILLY BONUS
Advanced Difficulty: BLOOMIN ARD
Easy Difficulty: TOO EASY
Muppet Commentary: BOX CHATTER
Wipeout Mode: PI MAN
Change Sound Effects: SWAP SHOP
Change Graphics:
VIRTUALLY VIRTUAL
Overhead View: ZOOM LENSE
Goto Round 16: Change the first letter in Jean Alesi's name to N.

**JET MOTO**
With difficulty set to PROFESSIONAL and lap count set at 6, press START. At the title screen, press ○, ○, ○, □, △, △, □, △. You can now access these cheats, at the title screen:

2 Player vs. CPU:
○, □, R2, ○, △, L2, ⇨,⇧
Unlimited Turbos:
△, ○, ⇨,R2, ⇧, □, ⇧, △
Rocket Racer:
△, ⇧, ⇧, L2, L2, ⇧,⇧, ⇧
Double Stunt Points:
⇨, ⇧, ○, L2, △, ○, R1, R2
No Resistance:
□, L1, △, ⇨,L1, ⇩, R2, △
Air Brakes:
R1, R2, ⇨, L2, ⇧, ○, ⇧, ○
Super Skills:
⇩, ○, ⇦, L1, ⇦, ⇨, ⇦, ⇨
Icy Track:
⇧, R2, R1, ⇨,L1, □, ⇨, ⇨
Access All Tracks
With difficulty on AMATEUR and trophy presenter on MALE, press START. Then press ⇧, ⇨, ⇩, ⇦, ⇧, ⇨, ⇩, ⇦. Then, with difficulty set at PROFESSIONAL and trophy person set at RAIDER'S CHOICE, press START again. Then enter ⇧, ⇦, ⇩, ⇨, ⇧, ⇦, ⇩, ⇨. You are now a MASTER with access to all tracks.

**THE KING OF FIGHTERS '95**
Access to Omega Rugal and Saishi: Answer YES at TEAM EDIT screen. At CHARACTER SELECT, hold down START and press ⇧+○, ⇨+□, ⇦+X, ⇩+△. You can now choose either one.

**MACHINEHEAD**
Enter these codes at MAIN MENU
Infinite Life: ○, L1, L1, L1, ○, L1, ○, ○, L1, ○, ○, ○, L1, L1, L1, L1, L1, ○, ○, L1
Infinite Ammunition: ○, ○, ○, ○, L1, ○, L1, L1, ○, L1, ○, L1, L1, ○, L1, ○, L1, L1, L1, L1
Level Select: L1, ○, L1, L1, L1, ○, ○, ○, ○, L1, L1, ○, ○, L1, ○, L1, ○, ○, ○, ○. R1 and R2 switches levels.

**MADDEN NFL 98**
Secret Teams and Stadiums
In FRONT OFFICE, go to CREATE PLAYER and enter any of the following codes. Note: If you save and exit, you will see the teams in TEAM SELECT.

Teams:
EA Sports All-Stars:
ORRS HEROS
Tiburon Development Team:
LOIN CLOTH
All-Time All-Madden:
COACH
All Sixties Team:
PAC ATTACK
All Seventies Team:
STEELCURTAIN
All Eighties Team:
GOLD RUSH
NFC All-Pro Team:
ALOHA
ACF All-Pro Team:
LUAU
All-Time Stat Leader Team:
LEADERS
Stadiums:
Alameda County Coliseum: SNAKE
Astrodome: JETSONS
Joe Robbie Stadium: DANDAMAN
Municipal Stadium: DAWGPOUND
"Old West" Stadium: GHOST TOWN
RFK Stadium: OLDDC
Tampa Stadium: BIG SOMBRERO
Tiburon Complex: JSHARKSFIN

**MARVEL SUPER HEROES**
Boss Codes
Finish the game on any difficulty setting. Then with default settings, go to the select screen and enter the following commands:

Dr. Doom - Press ⇩, ⇩, then press and hold X, then ○, then R1.
Thanos - Press ⇧, ⇧, then press and hold L1, then △, then □.

**MECHWARRIOR 2**
Enter these at the PASSWORD screen:
Invincibility: ##XO/A~~UZ
Infinite Ammunition: TOXO/AX~TU
Access All Missions: T<XO/AXA<=
Extra Weapon Variants: T#XO/AX<<<
Use Any Mech: #OXO/A~~O/
Jump Jets for All Mechs: #YXO/A~YOL
Access "Elemental" Mech Chassis:
T/XO/AZ~#*
Access "Tarantula" Mech Chassis:
#/XO/A4~LY
"Cruise Control" Throttle: #AXO/A4YYA
Slow Heat Build-Up: #XXO/A4>Y+

**MICRO MACHINES V3**
Cheat codes
Enter the following codes while the game is paused:
Low camera angle -
⇦, ⇨, □, ○, ⇦, ⇨, □, ○.
Slowed computer cars -
○, △, □, X, ○, △, □, X.
Super Speed -
X, ○, □, △, X, X, X, X.
Super Jumps -
⇦, ⇦, ⇩, ⇧, ⇩, ⇦, ⇩, ⇩.
Change vehicles -
⇩, ⇩, ⇧, ⇧, ⇨, ⇨, ⇦, ⇦.
Debug Menu -
□, ○, ○, △, X. Then enter the following commands for the following effects:
Banzai! - Press X, ○, △, and □ simultaneously to make all cars explode.
Camera angle - Hold Select and move the D-pad.
Zoom in/out - Hold Select and press L2 or R2.
Auto Pilot - Hold Select and □.
Always first place - Hold Select and press X.

**MORTAL KOMBAT 3**
Access Cheat Menu
Enter X, O, Δ, R1, R1, R2, R2, R1, R1 during the opening cinematics. Shao Kahn will say, "You will never win" if you enter the code fast enough. Press up on the KOMBAT block to access the cheat menu.

**MORTAL KOMBAT MYTHOLOGIES: SUB-ZERO**
Enter these codes, at the PASSWORD screen:
Infinite Lives: GTTBHR
10 Urns of Vitality: NXCVSE
End Credits: CRVDTS
Fatality: About one step back from fallen opponents, ⇨, ⇩, ⇨+ High Punch.
Stage Passwords:
Wind Stage: THWMSB
Earth Stage: CNSZDG
Prison Stage: RGTKCS
Water Stage: ZURKDM
Fire Stage: JYPPHD
Bridge of Immortality: QFTLWN
Qhan Chi's Fortress: ZCHRRY

**MORTAL KOMBAT TRILOGY**
Stage Select
At the select screen, highlight Sonya, hold ⇧, and press Start. Choose any fighter and before the match begins, a menu will appear that allows you to select which arena youwant to fight in.
Secret Character
At the select screen, choose any of the ninjas, and before the fight starts, press and hold Run + Block + High Punch + High Kick + and ⇦ (⇨ if you're on the 2 Player side) until the fight starts. You will change into Chameleon.
Secret Cheat Menu
Go into Options, select Game Configure, then press and hold "L1 + L2 + R1 + R2 + ⇧. The "?" on the Options screen will be selectable, where you'll be able to activate Health Recovery, Low Damage, and other options.

**NANOTEK WARRIOR**
During gameplay, pause the game and enter the following commands:
Stop Ship -
Δ, ⇦, Δ, ⇨, Δ, ⇧, Δ, Start
Mass Destruction -
□, O, R2, R2, ⇦, ⇧, ⇩, X
Full Shield -
Select, O, ⇨, ⇧, ⇧, L1, L1, X
Warp Boost -
O, □, O, □, Δ, Δ, Δ, X
Save Game Anytime -
⇦, ⇨, ⇦, ⇦, R2, O, L1, X
Random Curving -
O, Select, ⇦, □, □, ⇩, ⇩, X
"Semi-Cockpit" Mode -
Δ, O, □, □, Δ, Δ, Select, Start
Random Enemy Position -
R1, R1, ⇧, O, □, Δ, L2, X

**NBA JAM EXTREME**
After answering YES to KEEP RECORD?, enter any of these codes to access the playoffs:
Game 1 of semis: P, L, (backspace twice), A, Y, (backspace twice), O, F, (backspace twice), F, S, (backspace twice) then enter initials and date of your choice.
Game 4 of semis: C, H, (backspace twice), E, E, (backspace twice), S, Y, (backspace twice) then enter initials and date of your choice.
Game 1 of finals: F, I,(backspace twice), N, A, (Backspace twice), L, S, (backspace twice), then enter initials and date of your choice.
Game 5 of finals: N, O, (backspace twice), V, I, (backspace twice), C, E, (backspace twice), then enter initials and date of your choice.
Unlimited Turbo: Hold down TURBO, then press ⇧, ⇩, ⇧, ⇩ at the TONIGHTS GAME screen
Enter the following codes, at TIP OFF, before the ref throws up the ball: NOTE: All buttons are for default controls.
Soccer Ball Mode:
Δ ,Δ, R1, R1, R2, R2, R2
Beach Ball Mode:
Δ ,Δ, R1, R2, R1, Δ, Δ
Steal Mode: Δ ,Δ, Δ, R1, R1, R1, R2, R2, R2, Δ, Δ, Δ
Speed Mode:
R2 (ten times), Δ ,Δ, Δ
Rainbow Mode:
R1 (five times), Δ ,Δ, R1 (six times)

**NBA LIVE '98**
At the main screen, press O, and you should see a new set of options. Highlight Rosters, and press the X button. Choose Custom Teams, and enter the following City and Team Name:

| | |
|---|---|
| City: EA | Team: Europals |
| City: Hitmen | Team: Coders |
| City: Hitmen | Team: Earplugs |
| City: Hitmen | Team: Idlers |
| City: Hitmen | Team: Pixels |
| City: QA | Team: Campers |
| City: QA | Team: Testtubes |
| City: TNT | Team: Blasters |

To enable the Secrets Menu, start any normal game and forward to the User Setup Screen. Enter the word "Secrets" and you should be in the Secrets Menu. From here, enter the following words in the Secrets Menu:
Seaweed - Underwater basketball
Scary - Home team becomes clowns, aliens, and mummies
Freaky - Away team becomes clowns, aliens, and mummies
Cloak home - Home team's selected player becomes invisible
Cloak away - Away team's selected player becomes invisible
Lizard - Home team blends with court
Reptile - Away team blends with court
Eyepatch - Create players with an eyepath
Monocle - Create players with a monocle

**NFL GAMEDAY '98**
The easter eggs that you get at the end of a season are as follows:
Super Kickers: BIG FOOT
Lenient Refs: BLIND REF
Tough Refs: BUSY REF
Equal Stats: EQUAL TEAMS
Fast Players: FIRE DRILL
Miniature Players: FLEA CIRCUS
Advance Difficulty: GD CHALLENGE
Better Recievers: GLOVES
Headless Players: HORSEMEN
Giant Players: HUMONGOUS
Amped Speed Burts: JUICE
Better Secondary: LEECH
Players are handless: LOOK MA
Loud Commentator: LOUD MOUTH
McMahon Mania: MCMAHON

Better jukes: NSE
Low Crowd Volume: QUIET CROWD
Increase Reciever Range: STRETCH
Loft Ball: THIN AIR
Drab Graphics: VIRTUAL POLYGONS
Dumb AI: WATERY AI

**NFL QUARTERBACK CLUB '97**
Secret Teams
Enter L2, ∆, R2, R2, L2, R2 at the TEAM SELECT screen. Over 100 more teams will become available.

**NHL 98**
Enter these codes at the PASSWORD screen:
Big Heads:
BRAINY
Big Players:
BIBBIG
Small Players:
NHLKIDS
Stanley Cup Victory Video:
STANLLEY

**NHL OPEN ICE**
Play As Gordie Howe
Input the initials G_H and the date as March 31. Now the master of Old Time Hockey is yours.

**NIGHTMARE CREATURES**
Enter the code ⇦, ⇧, ∆ ,⇩, O, ∆, □, ⇩ at the PASSWORD screen. When you start, you will have access to the cheat menu.

**NUCLEAR STRIKE**
Stage Passwords
Level 1: Delta: JUNGLEWAR
Level 2: Isllant: CUTTHROATS
Level 3: Peace 1: COUNTDOWN
Level 4: Peace 2: PLUTONIUM
Level 5: DMZ: PUSAN
Level 6: Fortress: ARMAGEDDON
Bonus Level: Lightning: LIGHTNING

**OGRE BATTLE**
Secret Stage:
If you enter your name as "Fireseal" then when the game starts, you will be allocated a special army and be allowed to battle on the secret island of Dragon's Haven.

**PROJECT: OVERKILL**
Note: All cheats must be entered while game is paused and SOUND VOLUME is highlighted:
Cloak: (while pressing ∆) □, O, O, □, release ∆, (while pressing X) ∆, ∆, then release X.
Turbo: (while pressing ⇧) ∆, ∆, ∆, release ⇧, (while pressing ⇩) X, □, O, release ⇩.
Shield: (while pressing ⇨) O, □, ∆, release ⇨, (while pressing ⇦) □, O, X release X.
Max Life: (while pressing □) O, X, ∆, release □, (while pressing O) □, X, ∆, release □.
Max Ammo: (while pressing O) □, release O, (while pressing ∆) X, (while pressing O) X, release O, (while pressing X) □, release X.
Skip Level: X, ⇧, ⇩, ⇧, (while pressing □) O, release □, (while pressing X) ∆, release X.

**RAGE RACER:**
Mirror Mode: Hold down L1 + R1 + START (when at Car Select screen) until race starts.
Custom Color Change:
Hold down L1, L2, R1, R2 + SELECT while highlighting a color pallete. Now you can change the color.

**RALLY CROSS**
Cheat Codes
Enter code as season name:
Veteran Mode: vet me
Pro Level: im a pro
Access All: weeoo
No Collisions: banzai
Fat Tires: fat tires
90 degree turns: spinner
Invisible Car: wheels
Invisible Tires: no wheels
Nullify Viscous Effects: noviscous
Double Gravity: stone
1/2 Gravity: float
3/4 Gravity: feather

**RELOADED:**
Press pause and hold down the L1 and L2 until cursor freezes. Then enter code (while still pressing L1 and L2):
Health: ⇩, ⇨, ⇦, ∆ ,⇨, ⇩
Ammo: ∆, ⇦, ⇦, ⇦, O, ∆, ⇩
Weapon Up: ⇦, ⇧, X, O
Skip Level: ⇦, ∆ , X, ⇨,O, ∆, ⇩
Play as Fwak: (at player select) L1, O, R1, ⇩, ⇩, R1, O, L1, L1

**ROBOTRON X:**
Power-Up
Enter without pausing. Can be used up to five times per level.
Flame: ⇩, ⇨, ⇩, ⇨, O
Pulse: ⇧, O, ⇩, ⇨, □
Speed: ⇦, ⇦, ⇨, ⇨, ∆
Shield: ⇩, ⇦, □, O
2-Way Shot: ⇧, ∆ ,⇧, ∆
3-Way Shot: ⇨, ⇨, □, X
4-Way Shot: ⇩, ⇩, ⇧, O

**RUSH HOUR:**
At the "Press Start" screen:
Bonus Track: X, ⇧, ∆, ⇩, R1, L1
Hidden Cars: ⇧, ⇦, ⇨, X, O, □
Reverse Track: ⇦, ∆, R1, O, L1, ⇩
Championship Race: ⇨, □, ⇦, O, ⇧, X

**SOVIET STRIKE:**
Level Codes:
Campaign 1: Crimea: WORSTCASE
Campaign 2: Black Sea: GRANDTHEFT
Campaign 3: Caspian: GROZNEY
Campaign 4: Dracula: CHERNOBYL
Campaign 5: Kremlin: CIVILWAR
Super Copter of Justice: THEBIGBOYS

**STAR GLADIATOR**
To play Bilstein, in arcade mode, go to the character select screen, highlight Hayato, press and hold Select, move the cursor to the right of Gore, and press X, O, X, O, □, □, □, ∆, ∆, ∆, then O + X simultaneously.
To play as Kappah, enter the Bilstein code, then on the character select screen, highlight Bilstein, hold Select, move the cursor to the left of Hayato, and press O, □, ∆, □, X, □, ∆, □, O,

□, then press Δ + X simultaneously. To play as Blood, enter the Kappah code, then on the character select screen, highligh Hayato, hold Select, move the cursor to the left of Bilstein, press X, □, X, □, X, □, then press right to highlight Kappah, and press O, Δ, O, Δ, O, Δ, then press L1 + R1 simultaneously.

**STAR WARS: MASTERS OF TERAS KASI**

Secret Characters: To gain these secret characters, you must be playing with "Player Change At Continue" off.
Darth Vader:
Beat the game with Luke, on STANDARD, ARCADE, mode.
Stormtrooper:
Beat the game with Han, on STANDARD, ARCADE mode.
Slave Leia:
Beat the game with Leia, on STANDARD, ARCADE mode.
Jodo Kast: Beat seven or more characters in SURVIVAL mode.
Mara Jade: While in JEDI mode, hold L1 + R1 + L2 when entering TEAM mode. Then, beat all of the combatants.
Arena Select:
Beat the game, on STANDARD, ARCADE mode with Chewie.

**STREET FIGHTER ALPHA:**

Secret Characters:
Press the buttons while "?" is highlighted (default controls)
M.Bison (player 1): While holding L2, press ⇦, ⇦, ⇩, ⇩, ⇦, ⇩, ⇩, □+Δ
M.Bison (player 2): While holding L2, press ⇨, ⇨, ⇩, ⇩, ⇨, ⇩, ⇩, □+Δ
Akuma (player 1): While holding L2, press ⇦, ⇦, ⇩, ⇩, ⇩, □+Δ
Akuma (player 2): While holding L2, press ⇨, ⇨, ⇨, ⇩, ⇩, ⇩, □+Δ
Dan: (1 and 2 player): While holding L2 and R2, press Δ, □, X, O, Δ

**STREET FIGHTER EX PLUS ALPHA**

Secret Characters
Highlight PRACTICE at MODE SELECT screen.
Press SELECT, ⇧, ⇨, ⇩, ⇨, SELECT
Bonus Game:
Highlight PRACTICE at MODE SELECT screen. Press SELECT, ⇧, ⇧, ⇨, ⇧, ⇨, ⇧, SELECT.

**SUPER PUZZLE FIGHTER II TURBO**

Enter the following codes at the character select screen:
Akuma - Highlight Morrigan, hold Select, and press ⇩, ⇩, ⇩, ⇦, ⇦, ⇦, O.
Dan - Highlight Morrigan, hold Select, and press ⇦, ⇦, ⇦, ⇩, ⇩, ⇩, O.
Devilot - Highlight Morrigan, hold Select, press ⇦, ⇦, ⇦, ⇩, ⇩, ⇩, O (press O when the timer hits 10 seconds left).
Hsien Ko's sister- Highlight Morrigan, hold Select, and press ⇨, O.
Anita - Highlight Morrigan, hold Select, and press ⇨, ⇨, O.

**TIME CRISIS**

Secret Cheat Menu
On the title screen, aim for the upper portion of the letter "R" (the inner circle part of the R) twice, and then shoot the center of the target next to the letter "E" twice. A menu will pop up that will allow access to infinite continues, no reload time, and extra lives.

**TOMB RAIDER**

Level Skip:
While in INVENTORY, press L2, R2, L1, O, Δ, L1, R2, L2.
Access All Weapons:
While in INVENTORY, press L1, Δ, R2, L2, L2, R2, O, L1

**TOMB RAIDER 2**

"Bombshell" Laura:
With the R1 button, have Laura step forward, step back, do three 360 turns and jump backwards. Watch Lara become a *literal* bombshell.
Level Skip:
With the R2 button, have Laura step left, then right, then left. Now, using the R1 button, walk her backwards, then forwards, then do three 360 turns. Finish up with a jump forward, performing the ROLL function in mid air. She should freeze in mid-air, taking you to the next level.
Access All Weapons:
With the R2 button, move left, then right, then left. Now, using the R1 button, walk her backward, then forwards and then do three 360 turns, finishing off with a backward jump.
Execute a ROLL in mid air.

**TREASURES OF THE DEEP:**

While paused, enter any code.
Maximum Continues: ⇩, X, ⇦, □, ⇧, ⇧, Δ, Δ, ⇨, ⇨, O, O, R2, R2, R2, L2, L2, L2
Infinite Health: ⇩, X, ⇦, □, ⇧, ⇧, Δ, Δ, ⇨, ⇨, O, O, Δ, Δ, X, X
Max Air & Health: ⇩, X, ⇦, □, ⇧, ⇧, Δ, Δ, ⇨, ⇨, O, O, ⇧, ⇩, ⇨, ⇨, X, X
Infinite Air: ⇩, X, ⇦, □, ⇧, ⇧, Δ, Δ, ⇨, ⇨, O, O, Δ, O, X, □, ⇧, ⇨, ⇩, ⇦
Turbo: ⇩, X, ⇦, □, ⇧, ⇧, Δ, Δ, ⇨, ⇨, O, O, R1, R2, R1, R2, R1, R2
All Equipment: ⇩, X, ⇦, □, ⇧, ⇧, Δ, Δ, ⇨, ⇨, O, O, L1, L1, L1, L1, R1, R1, R1, R1, L1, L1, L1, L1, R1, R1, R1, R1
All Weapons: ⇩, X, ⇦, □, ⇧, ⇧, Δ, Δ, ⇨, ⇨, O, O, R1, R1, R1, R1, L1, L1, L1, L1, R1, R1, R1, R1, L1, L1, L1, L1
Unlimited Payload: ⇩, X, ⇦, □, ⇧, ⇧, Δ, Δ, ⇨, ⇨, O, O, Δ, ⇧, X, ⇩
Two Million Gold: ⇩, X, ⇦, □, ⇧, ⇧, Δ, Δ, ⇨, ⇨, O, O, R1, R2, L1, L2, R1, R2, L1, L2
Reveal Map: ⇩, X, ⇦, □, ⇧, ⇧, Δ, Δ, ⇨, ⇨, O, O, □, X, O, X, □
No Fines: ⇩, X, ⇦, □, ⇧, ⇧, Δ, Δ, ⇨, ⇨, O, O, R2, R1, L2, L1
Open Doors: ⇩, X, ⇦, □, ⇧, ⇧, Δ, Δ, ⇨, ⇨, O, O, X, O, Δ, □
Complete Stage: ⇩, X, ⇦, □, ⇧, ⇧, Δ, Δ, ⇨, ⇨, O, O, Δ, Δ, Δ, ⇩, ⇩, ⇩
Complete All Stages: ⇩, X, ⇦, □, ⇧, ⇧, Δ, Δ, ⇨, ⇨, O, O, □, X, X, X, □, Δ, Δ, Δ, □, X, X, X
Access All Stages: ⇩, X, ⇦, □, ⇧, ⇧, Δ, Δ, ⇨, ⇨, O, O, ⇩, ⇨, ⇧, ⇦, Δ, X
Disable Currents: ⇩, X, ⇦, □, ⇧, ⇧, Δ, Δ, ⇨, ⇨, O, O, R1, L1, L2, R2, X
Retrieve Atlantis Piece: ⇩, X, ⇦, □, ⇧, ⇧, Δ, Δ, ⇨, ⇨, O, O, L1, L2, L1, L2, □, O
Overhead View: ⇩, X, ⇦, □, ⇧, ⇧, Δ, Δ, ⇨, ⇨, O, O, Δ, □, X, □

**WCW NITRO**

At the title screen, press R1, R1, R1, R1, L1, L1, L1, L1, R2, R2, R2, R2, L2,

L2, L2, L2, and Select for an additional 48 selectable characters.
For secret arenas, highlight the "Ring" option and press R1, R2, R1, R2, and Select to scroll through many secret rings (press L1, L2, L1, L2, and Select to scroll back).

**VMX RACING**
Before you hit any jump, tap the R1 or R2 button four times for automatic stunts. R2 will peform flips, no hands, and no footers, while R1 peforms 360° spins and kicks.

## Saturn Codes

**ALIEN TRILOGY**
Cheat Codes
Go to the password screen and enter the following codes:
Invincibility: FVNKYG1BBON
All weapons: F1SH1NGFORGVNS
Infinite ammunition: F1LLMYPOCK1TS

**BUG TOO!**
Flying Mode
During gameplay, pause the game and press L shift, A, left, L shift, right, down, down and unpause. Press and hold Y to make your character fly.
Invincibility
During gameplay, pause the game and press R shift, right, A, L shift, right, A, down, Y and unpause.
Cheat Menu
During gameplay, pause the game and press L shift, A, Z, Y, left, right, A, down, right, L shift. A menu will appear, allowing you to switch characters, access a Sound test, turn the flying cheat on, and a level select.

**CHRISTMAS NIGHTS**
Date and Time Codes
Christmas Nights has date and time release options. Change your date and time on your Saturn to access the following options:
Enter dates in December or January to play in the snow with a Christmas theme.
Enter dates from other months of the year to play with the standard NiGHTS settings.
Enter the date April 1 (April Fool's) to play as Reala.
9:00 AM the snow changes to crescent moons.
12:00 PM the snow changes to purple gems.
3:00 PM the snow changes to candy.
9:00 PM the snow changes to stars.
12:00 AM the snow changes to hearts.

**COMMAND & CONQUER**
Power-Up Codes:
At any time during the game, press START to pause, then enter one of the following codes. When you press START again to unpause, you will have access to the feature you requested as follows:
Nuclear Strike: A, B, C, Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, Down, Right, Up, A
Ion Cannon: A, B, C, Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, Down, Right, Up, B
Air Strike: A, B, C, Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, Down, Right, Up, C
Extra $5,000: Right, Left, A, B, C, Z, Y, X, Right, Left
Reveal Entire Map: Up, Down, Right, Left, A, Up, Down, Right, Left, A

**DAYTONA USA CCE**
Spinning Jeffery
In Expert mode, press X while driving backwards near the Jeffrey statue.
Mirror Mode
To race tracks in reverse, hold X + Y + Z while selecting a track.
Daytona Car
At the main menu screen, hold X + Y + Z + R and then press C to pick a race mode.
Play as Uma
Enter the Daytona code, then return to the main menu, hold X + Z + L and press C to pick your race mode.
Play as Uma2
Enter the Uma code, then return to the main menu, hold L + R + Y + Z and press C to pick your race mode.
Slot Machine
On the Three 7 Speedway race course, as you pass the slot machine, press X to stop the slots. If you score three 7's or three bars you'll gain extra time.

**DRAGON FORCE**
Before booting up the game, at the CD player screen, hold X, Z, L ,R, and Start at the same time. Keep holding the buttons and when you reach the title screen, enter the following commands: down, down, up, down, down, left, left, left, up, down, right, right, right, then release Start, and press it again. Start a game as you normally would and when you get onto the map screen, go to your options to look for the Debug Menu which will allow you to change battle music, map speed, backgrounds, and skip through sequences.

**FIGHTER'S MEGAMIX**
Options Plus Menu
Play the game 500 times (not in one sitting) and "Options Plus" will be available, where you can select stages, select no damage, and choose caged or non-caged arenas.
Play as Palm Tree
To play the palm tree for the AM2 logo, play the game for 84 hours and then choose Kumachan with the Z button.
Play as Niku (Meat)
To play as Niku, turn on the Saturn 30 times (only has to be done once). Start a game with Kumachan and press X to select him.

**GUARDIAN HEROES**
Debug Menu
At the Start/Options screen, select Options, and highlight "Exit." While highlighting "Exit" hold down X, B and Z. While holding these buttons down, press and hold down, and when the option "DIP Switch" is highlighted, quickly press the A button. Once done, you'll be able to access a Debug Menu, where you can see all the different endings, stage-select, all the characters selectable in Battle Mode, and many other options

**LAST BRONX**
Strange Extra Options

First beat the game in Arcade mode on Arcade difficulty without losing a round and continuing. Then, enter the following at the character select screen:
For Lisa, Zaimoku, Nagi, Yusaku, an Red Eye, highlight the character and hold left and press A or C.
For Tommy, Joe, Yoko, Kurosawa, or Red Eye, highlight the character, and hold right and press A or C.
Extra Difficulty
Load a saved game off your Saturn 15 or more times, and a new diffculty setting menu will be shown.

**MANX TT SUPERBIKE**
Secret Bikes
Select Arcade Mode and when the Transmission Select screen appears, press Y and let the timer run out. When the race starts, you'll be racing a new bike.
Sheep Mode
Start any game and at the Transmission Select screen, press up, up, down, down, left, right, Z, and Y. Once done, start a race and all the racers will be riding sheep.

**MARVEL SUPER HEROES**
Boss Codes
To play both Dr. Doom or Thanos, beat the game on any difficulty and at the character select screen:
Dr. Doom - press down, down, and press and hold A, then B, then C.
Thanos - press up, up, then press and hold Z, then, Y, then X.

**MEGAMAN 8**
Animation Sequences
At the main menu scren, highlight "Bonus Mode" hold the L shift and R shift, and press Start. You will see a new option called "Animation."

**MEGAMAN X4**
Alternate MegamanX and Zero
At the character select screen, highlight Megaman X and press B twice, left six times, then hold L and R shift, and press Start. To play as Black Zero, highlight Zero, hold the R shift, press right six times, release R shift, hold B and press Start.

**MR. BONES**
At the Start/Options screen, press R Shift, L Shift, R Shift, R Shift, L Shift, R Shift, L Shift, L Shift, R Shift, L Shift, R Shift, and R Shift. A Stage Select menu will appear where you can highlight and select any stage.

**NIGHTWARRIORS: DARKSTALKERS REVENGE**
Extra Turbo Speed and Secret Menu:
At the Options menu, highlight "Turbo Speed" and press X, X, right, A, and Z for up to eight stars of Turbo Speed.

For the Secret Menu, Go to the Options menu, highlight "Configuration" and press B, X, down, A, and Y quickly. A new feature called "Appendix" will appear at the bottom where you can access a BGM Test, a Full Animation setting, alter the background scenery, and other cool options.

**PANZER DRAGOON**
Space Harrier Mode
Access the CD Menu of the Saturn system (either by putting nothing in the disc or hold the L + R when the Saturn starts up). Choose "System Settings" and choose German for "Languages." Start the game up and press Start at the title screen, then press X, right, X, down, X, left, X, up, X, and Z.
Invincibility
Go to the Start/Options screen and press L shift, L shift, R shift, R shift, up, down, left, and right.
Infinite Continues
At the Start/Options screen, press up, X, right, Y, down, Z, left, Y, up, and X.
Stage Select Menu
Go to the Start/Options screen and press up, up, down, down, left, right, left, right, X, Y, and Z.
Weapon Power-Ups
Go into the Options Menu and press up, X, right, Y, down, Z, left, Y, up, and X. To access the weapon power-ups, hold down the following buttons at the Episode screen:
A or X - normal weapon
Y - multi shot
Z - wide shot
B - red lasers
C - sidewinders

**RESIDENT EVIL**
Battle Mode
On the title screen, press and hold X, Y, Z, and press Start on Controller 2.
Alternate Uniforms
Start a new game and when the introduction starts, hold the L and R shift buttons on Controller 2 until you start your game.

**SATURN BOMBERMAN**
Secret Characters
To access the secret character Manto and Yuna, select Battle Mode then press and hold L and R shift buttons. Both characters will be selectable in Battle Mode.
Change Time and Levels
In Battle Mode, at the Stage Select screen, hold down X + Y + Z. You can change the time of each stage from dawn till dusk by press up or down on the stage select screen. This will also change the arena itself.

**SEGA RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP**
Secret Course and Car
Hold down the X and Y button at the main menu screen and choose a mode to race in. You can access the difficult Lakeside course.
To get the Lancia Stratos, at the main menu screen, press X, Y, Z, Y, and X.

**SONIC 3D BLAST**
Cheat Codes
On the title screen, hold down C and press Start. Now, start a game, pause the game, and press the following buttons:
A - Skips one level
B - Skip ahead 3 levels
C - Skip to Panic Puppet, Act 3
X - Adds an extra life
Y - Adds one medal
Z - Receives all Chaos Gems

**SONIC JAM**
To enable the FMV trick, find the Sonic Movie House in Sonic World and before you enter the Movie House, press and hold X, Y, and Z, then enter using the A or C buttons. Now choose any FMV clip and every single video should play one after another.
To get the Secret Time Attack, Highlight Sonic World at the title screen and press and hold A and Start. You'll be dropped into Sonic World in an all new Time Attack mode where you'll need to grab all 100 rings under 60 seconds.

**STREET FIGHTER ALPHA**
Tag Team Bison
At the main menu, select "Arcade" and have two players join in. Player 1 must highlight Ryu, hold the L and R shift buttons, press up, up, release the L and R shifts, press up, up, and then press Jab punch. Player 2 must highlight Ken, hold the L and R shift buttons, press up, up, release the L and R shifts, press up, up and press Fierce punch. If done properly, M. Bison will appear and both of you will be able to fight him.
Secret Characters
Highlight the "?" and enter the following codes to access the secret characters:
M.Bison - Hold the L shift and press left, left, down, down, left, down, down, then X and Y simultaneously.
Akuma - Hold the L shift and press left, left, left, down, down, down, then X and Y simultaneously.

**STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2**
Classic Chun Li
At the default character select screen, highlight Chun Li, press and hold Start for about 2 seconds, then press any button. You'll play the classic Chun Li from Street Fighter 2 Championship Edition with all her moves.
Classic Zangief
At the default character select screen, highlight Zangief, press and hold Start, release the Start button, then move the cursor in these series of motions:
down, left, left, left, left, up, up, right, right, right, right, down, then choose Zangief.
Classic Dhalsim
At the default character select screen, highlight Dhalsim, press and hold Start, release the Start button, then move the cursor in this sequence:
left, down, right, up and then choose Dhalsim.
Evil Ryu
To select Evil Ryu, at the default character select screen, highlight Ryu, press and hold Start, release the Start button, the move the cursor in this sequence: right, up, down, left, then select Ryu
Shin Akuma
To use the ultimate Akuma, at the default character select screen, highlight Akuma, press and hold Start, release the Start button, then move the cursor in these series of motions:
down, down, right, down, right, down, down, down, left, down, left, down, the select Akuma.

**SUPER PUZZLE FIGHTER 2 TURBO**
Secret Characters
On the character select screen, enter the following commands for the secret puzzlers:
Hsien Ko's Sister - Highlight Morrigan, hold Start, press ⇨, then A
Akuma - Highlight Morrigan, hold Start, press ⇩, ⇩, ⇩, ⇦, ⇦, ⇦, then A.
Dan - Highlight Morrigan, hold Start, press ⇦, ⇦, ⇦, ⇩, ⇩, ⇩, then A.
Anita - Highlight Morrigan, hold Start, press ⇨, ⇨, then A.
Devilot - Highlight Morrigan, hold Start, press ⇦, ⇦, ⇦, ⇩, ⇩, ⇩, wait till the timer is at the 10 seconds, then press A.

**THREE DIRTY DWARVES**
Skip Stages
In the Options menu, press L and R shifts where a password screen will appear. Enter the code "MOSHOLU" and a stage select will appear as a new option.

**TOMB RAIDER**
Stage Skip
During gameplay, pause the game, and turn to the last page of the passport. Press Z, Y, Z, Y, X, X, X, and Start. Once done, press A and you'll skip to the next level.

**VIRTUA COP 2**
Character Select
When the stage select screen appears, hold the correponding buttons down to choose your character:
X - Rage
Y - Smarty
Z - Janet
Secret Menu Code
For this code to work, you have to have a gun peripheral in Controller port 1 and a regular controller in Controller port 2. When the title screen appears, press up, down, up, down, A, X, B, Y, C, and Z. You now have access to a secret menu.

**VIRTUA FIGHTER 2**
Play Dural
To play the boss in the sequel, highlight Akira and press down, up right, then A + left.

**VIRTUAL ON**
Play Jaguarandi
To play the mid-boss character, at the title screen, hold down and press L + R shifts simultaneously. Jaguarandi should be just to the right of Raiden.
Prototype Raiden and Temjin
To play special versions of these two robots, at the title screen, hold up and press L + R shifts simultaneously. Both do slightly more damage than the original versions.
Pick-up
After beating the game, when the credits are rolling and when you first see Earth, start moving the controller in different motions. You may stop when you see the U.S. Sega credits roll, and a small ship will pick up your damaged robot from space.



## Nintendo 64 Codes

**BOMBERMAN 64**
Secret Stages
At the main menu screen, press the START button repeatedly and quickly. Once done, you'll have four new arenas in Battle Mode.

**CLAY FIGHTER 63-1/3**
To access the secret characters, enter the following commands at the character select screen:
Boogerman - Hold the L button and press ⇧, ⇨, ⇩, ⇦, ⇨, ⇦, on the D-pad.
Doctor Kiln - Hold the L button and press B, C⊂, C∩, C⊃, C∪, A.
Sumo Santa - Hold the L button and pres A, C∪, C⊃, C∩, C⊂, B.

**DIDDY KONG RACING**
Magic Codes
On the options menu screen, select "Magic Codes" and enter the following for some cool effects:
ARNOLD - Big Characters
TEENYWEENIES - Small Characters
JUKEBOX - Music Menu
FREEFRUIT - 10 Bananas
FREEFORFALL - Max. Power Up
BOGUSBANANAS - Bananas Reduce Speed
ROCKETFUEL - All Balloons Are Turbo
OFFROAD - Better Traction
BLABBERMOUTH - Horn Cheat
VITAMINB - Unlimited Bananas
BOMBS AWAY - All Balloons Are Missiles
DOUBLEVISION - Same Character Select

**DOOM 64**
Ultimate Password
At the Password Screen, enter the following to start the game with all weapons, invulnerability, and stage skip:
?TJL BDFW BFGB JVVB

**DUKE NUKEM 64**
Cheat Menu
On the Main Menu screen, press ⇦, ⇦, L, L, ⇨, ⇨, ⇦, ⇦. A cheat menu will appear. In the cheat menu, enter the following codes to unlock the hidden objects:
Invincibility - press the R button seven times, then press ⇦
Monsters - press L, C⊂, ⇦, R, C⊃, ⇨, ⇦, ⇦
All Items - press R, C⊃, ⇨, L, C⊂, ⇦, C⊃, ⇨
Level Select - press L, L, L, C⊃, ⇨, ⇦, ⇦, C⊂

**EXTREME G**
Gameplay Codes
When picking your vehicle, press R, select the Name Option, and enter the following codewords:
ANTIGRAV - Race Course Upside Down
ARSENAL - Unlimited Weapons
NITROID - Inifinite Nitros
ROLLER - All Vehicles on Track Turn Into Boulders
STEALTH - Invisible Vehicles
XTREME - Increases Top Speed

**GOLDENEYE**
To gain 31 extra secret characters, first go to the character select screen and enter the following commands:
1. Hold L+R and C⊂,
2. Hold L and C∩,
3. Hold L+R and left on the D-pad,
4. Hold L and right on the D-pad,
5. Hold R and down on the D-pad,
6. Hold L+R and C⊂,
7. Hold L and C∩,
8. Hold L+R and right on the D-pad,
9. Hold L+R and C∪,
10. Hold L and down on the D-pad.

**INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER 64**
Big Head Mode - At the title screen, press C∩, C∩, C∪, C∪, C⊂, C⊃, C⊂, C⊃, B, A, then Hold Z + Press START.
Secret Teams - At the title screen, press ⇧, L, ⇧, L, ⇩, L, ⇩, L, ⇦, R, ⇨, R, ⇦, R, ⇨, R, B, A, then Hold Z + Press START.

**KILLER INSTINCT GOLD**
Boss Code - When a character biography demo appears, press Z, A, R, Z, A, B. Gargos will be playable.
Bonus Options - When a character biography demo shows, press Z, B, A, Z, A, L. This will enable special character colors and three extra levels.
Secret Stage - When choosing characters in 2 Player Mode, hold ⇩ and press C∪ then you'll fight in a secret sky stage.

**MADDEN FOOTBALL 64**
Secret Team - Access the Create Player Option and enter the name "TIBURON," continue and select Save and Exit. When you start a game, all your players will stand 8'4" and have 100 in all their attributes.

**MARIO KART 64**
Reverse Tracks - Earn the gold trophy in all four cups in Mario GP 150cc Mode, and you can race all 16 courses in reverse.

**MORTAL KOMBAT TRILOGY**
Play as Khameleon
When the "story" screens appear in the demo, input C⊃, C∩, A, B, C∪, C∩, C⊃. Shao Kahn will say, "Khameleon," and he will now be selectable.
Play as Motaro
Choose any character, hold High Kick + Low Kick and hold the D-pad away from your opponent before the battle begins. When the fight starts, you'll change into Motaro. This only works on specific stages like Jade's Desert and the Wasteland.
Play as Shao Kahn
Choose any character, hold High Punch + Low Punch and hold the D-pad ⇩ before the battle begins. When the fight starts, you'll change into Shao Kahn. This only works on specific stages like the Rooftop and the Pit.
Hidden Game #1
After playing 50 straight games in two-player mode, you'll play a game of Pong.
Hidden Game #2
After playing 100 straight games in two-player mode, you'll play a game of Galaxian.
Hidden Game #3
After playing 150 straight games in two-player mode, you'll play a game of Space Invaders. Or, when you're on

The Pit stage, watch the moon in the background. When you see a shadow fly across it, press the Z button; the winner of that match will play Space Invaders.
Stage Select
At the character select screen, highlight Sonya, hold ⇧ and press Start. You'll be able to choose the stage before the fight.
Super Hard Mode
At the character select screen, highlight Kano, hold ⇩ and press Start. The "Choose Your Destiny" paths will be much harder now.
Free Play
When the "story" screens appear in the demo, input ⇩, ⇩, ⇧, ⇧, ⇨, ⇨, ⇦, ⇦ on the D-pad.
"More Kombat" menu
When the "story" screens appear in the demo, input C∪, B, A (Run, High Punch, Low Punch). Press Start to access the Kombat menu, then hold Up and press Start. When the main menu appears, you'll find a new option with a blue question mark; you can now select your stage, disable throws, have infinite "run" meters, turn on "Bloody Kombat" and activate the two secret characters, Human Smoke and Khameleon.
"Kombat Cheats" Menu
When the "story" screens appear in the demo, input C∩, C⊃, C∪, A, B, B, B, A, A (High Kick, Low Kick, Run, Low Punch, High Punch, High Punch, High Punch, Low Punch, Low Punch). Press Start to access the Kombat menu, then hold Up and press Start. When the main menu appears, you'll find a new option with a red question mark; you can now activate Free Play mode, have no time limit for fatalities, set one-round matches, or view collision boxes.

**NFL QUARTERBACK CLUB 98**
TGHTGRP - No turnovers
SMLMDGT - Tiny players
GLYTHMD - Giant players
STNTXTM - NFC, AFC, Acclaim, and Iguana Teams Available
DWNDRV - Eight downs

**STAR WARS: SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE**
X-Wing or Tie Fighter
Play the Skyhook Battle stage until you reach Skyhook station. When you've got the Outrider, shift the camera until you're behind it. Then, press Start, then hold ⇦ + L + R + Z + C⊂, + C⊃, +C∪; while holding these buttons, move Up or Down on the D-pad to select either an X-Wing or Tie Fighter.
See the Ending
Enter your name as "_Credits" When you start the game, you'll go directly to the end.

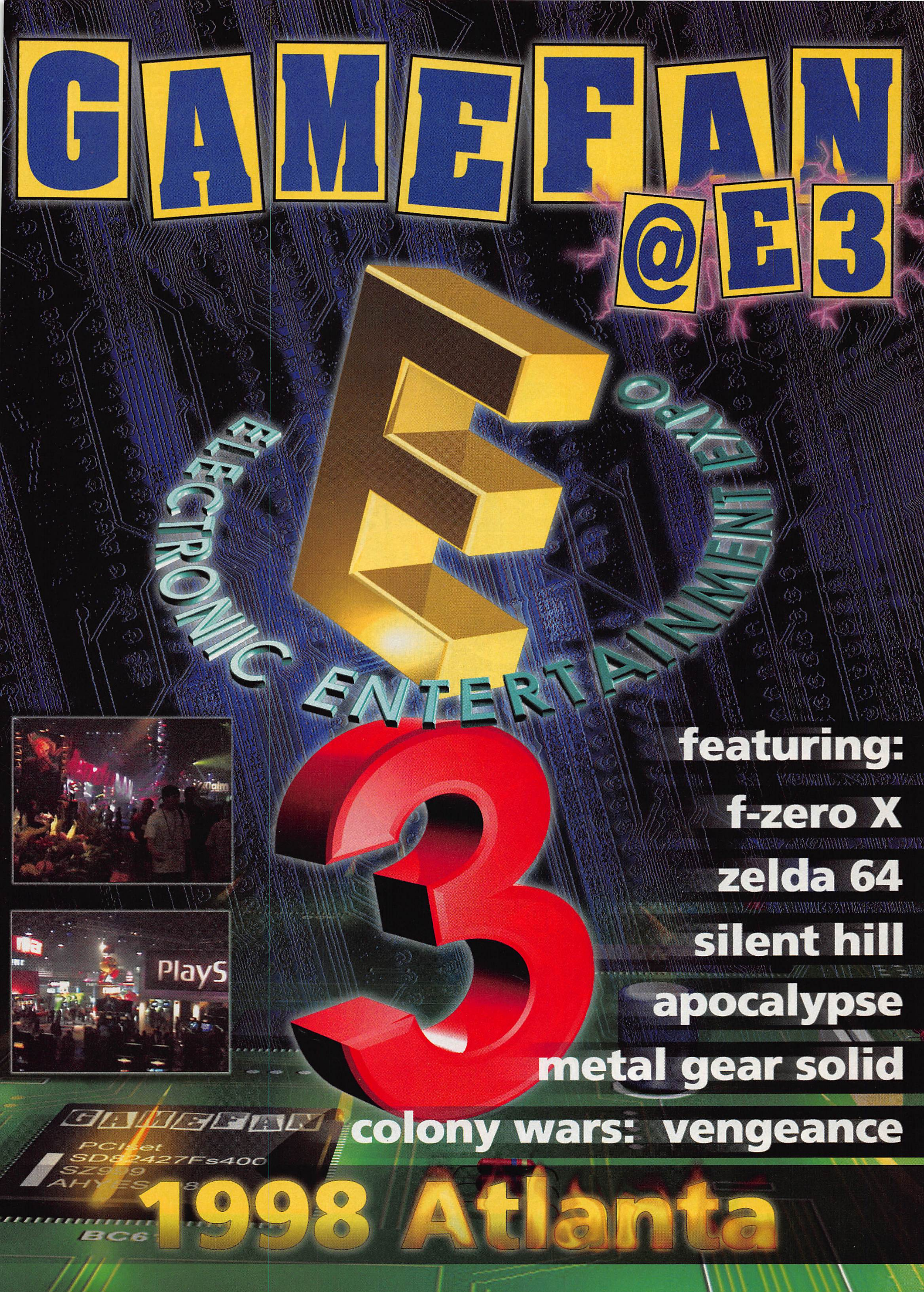
**TETRISPHERE**
Stage Select
Select "Single" from the main menu, then "New Name." Hold C⊃, + C∪, and press the L button; the numbers on the menu will change to different characters. Using these new characters, enter the following: Saturn, Flying Saucer, Rocketship, Heart, Skull. Now select "Start" and enter either the "Rescue," "Hide + Seek," or "Puzzle" game modes.
GameBoy Music
Select "Single" from the main menu, then "New Name." Hold C⊃, + C∪, and press the L button; Enter the name "GaMEBOY" but substitute the alien head for the letter "a." Now go to the Audio options to listen to the ten secret music tracks.

**TOP GEAR RALLY**
Cheat Codes
Enter at any time:
All cars - A, ⇦, ⇦, C∪, A, ⇨, Z
Access All Tracks - A, ⇦, ⇦, ⇨, ⇩, Z
Helmet Car - ⇧, ⇧, Z, B, A, ⇦, ⇦
Ice Cube Car - C∪, ⇧, B, ⇨,A, C∪, A, ⇨
Beachball Car - B, B, A, ⇦,⇦, C∪, A, ⇨

**TUROK: DINOSAUR HUNTER**
Cheat Codes
NTHGTHDGDCRTDTRK - activates all cheats and lets you warp to any stage.
RBNSMTH - Invincibility
CMGTSMMGGTS - All Weapons
BLLTSRRFRND - Infinite Ammo
FRTHSTHTTRLSCK--Infinite Lives
THSSLKSCL - Spirit Mode
GRGCHN - Big Head Mode
DNCHN - Tiny Enemies
DLKTDR - Pen and Ink Mode
CLLTHTNMTN - Quack Mode
FDTHMGS - View Credits

**WAR GODS**
Fatalities
Ahua Kin - Close, 3D, ⇧, ⇩, ⇧, + High Punch + Low Kick
Anubis - 3D, ⇨, ⇘, ⇩, ⇙, ⇦, + High Punch + Low Kick
CY-5 - Midscreen distance, ⇦, ⇦, + High Punch
Kabuki Jo - Sweep distance, ⇦, ⇙, ⇩, ⇘, ⇨, + Low Kick + High Kick
Maximus - 3D, + ⇨, ⇨, + High Punch + Low Punch
Pagan - Midscreen distance, ⇦, ⇨, + Low Punch
Tak - ⇦, ⇙, ⇩,⇘, ⇨, + Low Punch + High Kick
Vallah - Close, ⇨, ⇨, + Low Kick
Voodoo - Midscreen distance, ⇦, ⇨, + Low Punch
Warhead - Far, 3D, ⇨, ⇘, ⇩, ⇙, ⇦
Play Grox
At the character-select screen, quickly press ⇩, ⇨, ⇦, ⇦, ⇧, ⇩, ⇨, ⇧, ⇦, ⇦ then select your character.
Free Play
At the first War Gods title screen, press C⊂, C⊂, ⇨, A, B, C∩, C⊃. Go to the Options menu and next to "Continues" will be the option "Free Play."
Cheat Menu
At the first War Gods title screen, press ⇨, ⇨, ⇨, B, B, A, A. Go to the Options menu, and the "Cheat Menu" will be available

**WAVE RACE 64**
Ride the Dolphin
Pick Stunt Mode and the Dolphin Park course. Perform all the possible stunts (handstand, ride backwards, stand up, somersault, vertical flip off a ramp, barrel roll a ramp clockwise and counter-clockwise, and submarine dive off a ramp), go through all the rings, and finish the course before the times expires. Then go to the main menu, pick Championship mode and select "Warm Up." When the Watercraft Select menu appears, highlight your character, hold the analog ⇩ and pick your character.


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GAMEFAN
1998 Atlanta

# GameFan Assault Team Lands at E3 With All Guns Blazing!!!

The recent E3 Show in Atlanta, Georgia proved to be an intense experience for the valiant GF crew. The core staff of editors, accompanied by a crack squad of art personnel, invaded the floor of the Georgia World Congress Center. While the team was temporarily waylaid by an unscheduled stop in Birmingham, Alabama (something about being 'low on fuel') the mission seemed in doubt for a harrowing few minutes.

The troops pulled together and stormed the show floor en masse, trampling lesser publications under their shiny steel-toed boots, oiled with the ground-up remains of the less-than-worthy republic and those that imagined they were the one, true force. Even the pros and informers were wont to hide from the terror-inducing GF.
































And so it was their sworn duty to take no prisoners and secure the greatest coverage ever seen by the awestruck masses. As the heat and haze of the draining Atlanta humidity descended on the hard-core, they stormed the various structures, edifices, and fortresses lesser beings would describe as mere 'booths'. They went by the names Kid Fan, ECM, Video Cowboy, Dangohead, Hikaru, Reubus, Eggo, Bubba, El Niño, Wolfie, Mr. Goo, and the irrepressible Arcade Bob. Herein lies the record of their heroic exploits–let the world take note...












Crowds made way, **hardcore** gamers and scrubs alike, for the **elite GameFan** crew. As a **quiet hush** is **heard** from the onlookers, all knew that the **last** true **enthusiast** magazine had **arrived!!!**

# acclaim

## n64

### extreme g 2



Extreme G2 looks great with less fogging effect than it's predecessor. While the control took some time getting used to, this game was still pretty early. Still, it looks great, and if the game controls are tightened up, N64 gamers should be pretty happy when this title rockets out early.

### nfl qb club



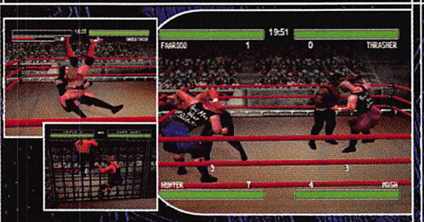
With 3-Time NFL MVP Brett Favre on the front of the box, NFL Quarterback Club '99 will probably sell millions... But as the best football game for the N64, this game delivers with over 1500 players, as well as the artificial intelligence and strategy written by N.Y Jets Offensive Coordinator Charles Weis. Look for this tile out in August '98.

### turok 2



While Turok 2 was not playable but shown at the show (a teasing fancy), Turok 2 madness occurred at the Acclaim Sports party. Looking a lot better, with a lot of cool weapons and less fog, Turok 2 is looking to outsell the original by a landslide. Looking very complete (aside from the "dud-like" homing missiles), look for Turok 2 3rd quarter.

### wwf warzone



WWF Warzone drew a bit of a crowd at the E3 show. Set for release summer of '98, this muscle-fest features over a dozen of the most popular wrestlers in the WWF, including Stone Cold, Brett Hart, The Undertaker, and Shawn Michael, as well as their patented moves. With over 300 moves, including each of the special signature moves of the wrestlers, it also comes complete with announcers Vince McMahon and Jim Ross.

## psx

### wwf warzone



The PS needs a really solid wrestling game and WWF Warzone just might deliver. Featuring over 16 characters (plus secret wrestlers), each wrestler has been portrayed with photo-realistic quality and motion capturing technology, matching all the moves of their real-life counterparts. You can also create your own wrestler, so look for this title summer of '98.

**Acclaim had a solid showing, and didn't really require much what with Turok 2 being shown behind closed doors the first night of the show to members of the press. Extreme G 2 was, surprisingly, faster than the first and you may want to keep a bucket near-by for those that don't take to motion sickness very well (Eggo, for instance). QB Club looked hot and WWF Warzone rounded out their strong showing. Too bad Shadow Man was only shown on video tape—it appears to be quite hot.**

# accolade

## psx

### big air



Another snowboarding game. What seperates this one from the pack? Absolutely nothing. It's 3D, has a half pipe and licensed gear. Not *1080*... or even *Cool Boarders 3*. If you can't get enough of that powdered stuff, though, this will be another romp for you.

### hardball 6



An impressive entry in a most unimpressive franchise. Not up to par with some of the competition, *Hard Ball 6* has made some substantial improvements. Better graphics, slightly better gameplay and a career mode make it playable. Some of the best stats around, still.

### star con



The fourth installment in the popular *Star Control* series, *StarCon* is a 3D space combat action game. With some beautiful graphics and deep gameplay (40+ hours), the entertainment factor is high. Fans of the series will dig this title. One and two player options available.

**Accolade came back from the PlayStation dead-zone with a pretty strong line-up of PC-friendly titles (don't cringe yet). The latest in the Hardball series of games, two new entries in the venerable (don't call it worn out) Test Drive series: A new chapter in the off road series and yet another entry in the 'regular' cars edition. Star Con was shown and is the next title in the fantastic Star Control series of games; easily Accolade's best title at the show. They rounded out their showing with, what else, another snowboarding game...<sigh>.**

### test drive 5



Bigger is better... or so we're told. Accolade has doubled the number of cars (to 28) and tripled the number of tracks (now there're 17)! Also added is a 2-player split screen mode and a hot pursuit mode, with the cops hot on your tail. A good improvement over last year's opus.

### test drive offroad



Go off-roadin' in a Hummer. Using the *Test Drive 4* engine (why not the *TD 5*?) you can grind your way through 6 races in your choice of 6 off-road vehicles. The first *TD:OR* wasn't very good. This is a definate improvement. The music is supplied by Sevendust.

# activision

## psx

### apocalypse



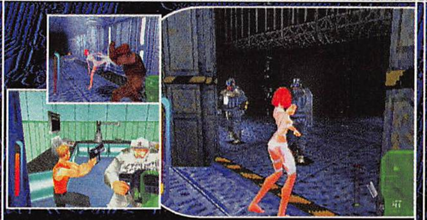
This came was a turd at last year's show. Much retooling and money later, Activision has not only salvaged the game, but made it quite entertaining. Apocalypse looks and plays very similar to the stellar One. One didn't have Bruce Willis, though, so yippee-kai-yay! Definitely one of E3's surprises.

### asteroids



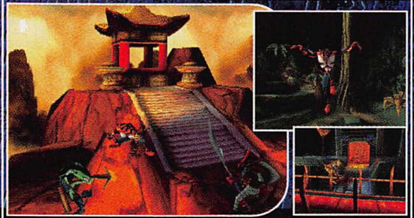
It's retro time in the gaming biz. The newest game to get an overhaul is the legendary Asteroids. A slick-looking update, this 3D version should suck old-school gamers back into hyper space. Hopefully the gameplay, in the final, will be as tight as in the original.

### fifth element



Oh, how I love thee, Leeloo. Lara Croft's got nothing on Milla—at least she's a real person. Control both Korben Dallas and Leeloo in this true-to-the-movie title. What could've been a total disaster actually ended up looking like one of the best adventure games at the show.

### t'ai fu



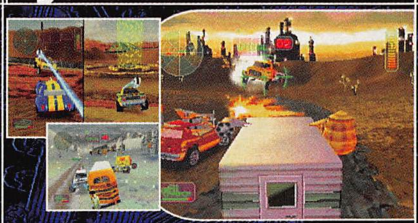
Play the part of a bipedal tiger man, from the Tiger Clan. Your people have been blamed for the slaughter of the Panda Monks and now you must prove your clan's innocence. Nice 3D graphics and character design give this Dreamworks title a glossy coat, but the gameplay is still a little early.

### tenchu



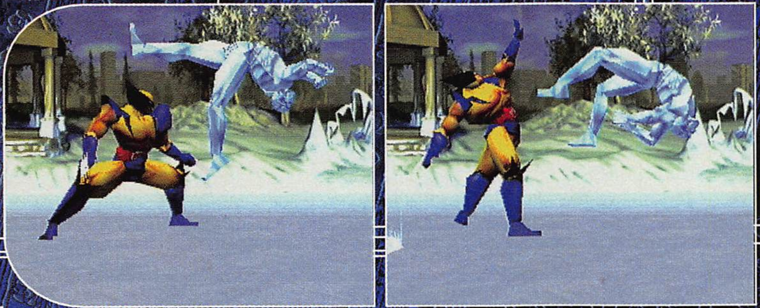
You play a ninja on the prowl. Unsuspecting prey will die the silent death that only the elusive ninja can inflict. Many changes have been implemented in the American release, including improved enemy AI and the ability to dismember! Maybe the best action/adventure title, at the show.

### vigilante 8



Going head to head with *Rogue Trip* and *Twisted metal 3*, *Vigilante 8* looks to be the frontrunner. Vibrant colors, huge arenas and some fantastic car physics make this puppy growl. Check out those vehicles... outrageous without being ridiculous. Those who are sick and twisted should find it very appetizing.

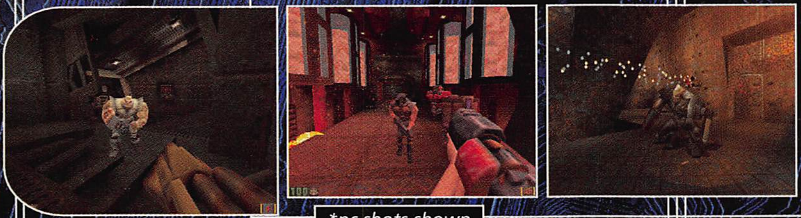
### x-men



Not due out until this Winter, *X-Men* is another log on the fighting game fire; a fire which is now burning out of control. While the look of the game is pretty good, the game is very early. I wonder if Professor X will have what it takes to fix it in time for its 1st quarter release—no worries.

## n64

### quake 2



*pc shots shown

Oh the humanity! Quake 2 is coming to the N64.* A respectable port of the monster sequel, Quake 2 should satisfy the appetites of all those yearning for another N64 corridor shooter. It's no GoldenEye, but what is? There is still enough blood and atmosphere to make you smile.

**With one of the single best showings at the entire E3, Activision took the show by force with a large number of very impressive titles. Leading the charge was the phenomenal looking Apocalypse (think One on steroids) and the ninja action title, Tenchu (with massive improvements for its US debut). The 5th Element has finally found a home at Activision as well, running under an upgraded Nightmare Creatures engine, as well as Vigilante 8 and Dreamworks' T'ai-Fu: take control of a bipedal Tiger man and tear your way through level after level of 3D mayhem (this one got the big-time Wolfie seal of approval). Rounding out their line-up was a 3D update on Asteroids; a great-looking 3D fighter starring the X-Men; and Quake 2 on the N64.**

# ascii

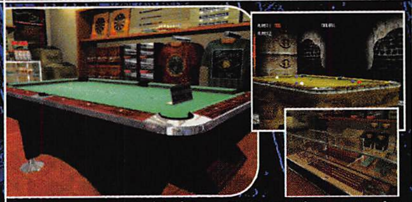
## psx

### project phantasma



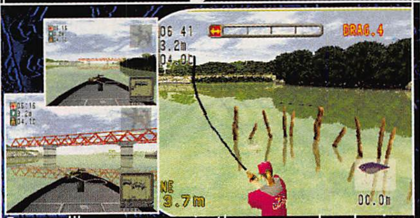
Without Virtual On 2 at the show (DAMMIT!), this dango had to resort to other means of mech action. This led me to the sequel to Armored Core, which is coming out to the U.S. sometime in the 4th quarter of '98. The gameplay remains pretty much the same as the original with more weapons, add-ons, and power-ups available, as well as a new challenge ladder mode.

### backstreet billiards



I know you're thinking I'm wasting my time here on a pool game when I should be spending more time on stuff like Metal Gear Solid or Zelda. Yet, a Dual Shock billiards game really got me interested, and as I found out, Backstreet Billiards puts you in the role of a pool hustler. I would call it a Billiard/RPG game. Look for this game in the 4th quarter of '98.

### bass landing



Seems like everyone in the game-developing community is jumping on the early boat for some digital bass. ASCII's Bass Landing looks and plays very well, with real-time weather changes and equipment upgrades to real in those real big gulpers. With full Dual Shock utilization, this game looks to bait most gamers 1st quarter of '99.

### clock tower 2



If you played the first Clock Tower, then all I advise is when playing Clock Tower II: The Struggle Within is to make sure you have a teddy bear and bat at all times. This time around, you play a schoolgirl with a split personality trapped in house full of horrors ranging from animated china, kid-sized jesters, and a figure armed with a LARGE cleaver wearing an oni (devil) mask. Utilizing the Dual Shock Pad adds more to the eerie atmosphere of the game. Clutch your blanket tightly when this title hits in the 4th quarter of '98.

### master of monsters



For those Genesis owners that loved the original, ASCII is bringing it home on the Playstation. While the graphics remain somewhat the same, the cool gameplay elements are all there. Taking a hint from Tecmo's Monster Rancher, you can combine two monsters together to gamble for a more powerful monster, or some miss-matched genetic mutation. Look for it 3rd quarter of '98.

## n64

### air boarders 64



Imagine the classic Atari arcade game 720 and fast forward the time line about 100 years into the future, and you've basically got AirBoardin' USA. Ride a hovering airboard around a huge city, all the while catching air and tricks in the pursuit of the "Master of Airboardin'" title. While catching air off major ramps is all-important, players also have the ability to race up and down city skyscrapers. A 2-player mode and Rumble-Pak utilization round out this gnarly game due out 3rd quarter of '98.

**Ascii had a fairly strong showing starting with the sequel to Sony's mech combat from last year in Armored Core: Project Phantasma (I can hear ECM panting in glee). Backstreet Billiards looks to one-up Interplay's VIrtual Pool and Bass Landing looks set to take the fishing category by storm (if you can take that genre by storm...). Clock Tower 2 is the follow up to the freaky Clock Tower of last year and one of Waka's favorite diversions (he was a big fan of those big scissors). Master of Monsters finally makes an appearance and a few of you may remember this one from the 16-bit days. Air Boarders 64 is more 'boarding action, minus the snow.**

# atlus

## psx

### bomberman world



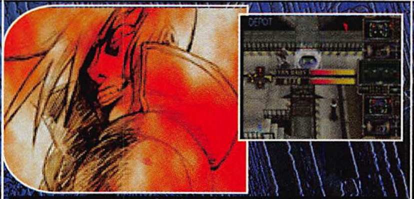
In direct competition with Poy Poy 2 for the PlayStation, Bomberman World is everything you'd expect. Check out these features: story mode, over 20 power-ups, dual shock compatibility and 10 multiplayer maps. Multiplayer modes are also included, like Tag Team and maniac Mode.

### brigandine



Another interesting RPG from Atlus. A cross between Ogre Battle and Dragon Force, Brigandine will satisfy the strategy gamer in you. Play one of five characters through 30+ hours of story. There are optional side quests, as well, which can reward you with special items. Really cool enemy design.

### trap gunner



Reminiscent of the classic Spy Vs. Spy game, for the Apple II, Trap Gunner is multiplayer mayhem. Six assassins are pitted against eachother in a battle to the death. This overhead action title, offers the player intense gaming in a 3D realm, full of traps and power-ups. Dual Shock compatible and split screen option.

**Atlus had a good show with the previously announced Kartia making the rounds and Hudson's Bomberman World is making the leap to American shores in short order. Brigandine was a newer strategy RPG that Atlus was showing, although I have to wonder how that fits into the sheme of things with Kartia (both being strategy RPGs). Then again, as far as some of us are concerned, strategy RPGs are where it's at. One of the more popular games at the recent Tokyo Game Show also put in an appearance in the form of Trap Gunner. Playing like a modern-day edition of Sega's arcade classic, Crackdown, this looks to be Atlus' big game this year.**

# capcom

## psx

### capcom generations

Capcom is introducing a new line of games to come: *Capcom Generations*, sure to provide gamers with nostalgia as they relive arcade classics at home. *Capcom Generations: Ghosts and Goblins* is comprised of *Ghosts 'n Goblins, Ghouls and Ghosts*, and *Super Ghouls 'n Ghosts*; *Capcom Generations: 1942* features the classics *1942, 1943*, and *1943 Enhanced*; and *Capcom Generations: Street Fighter II Collection* houses the first three *SF2s: Street Fighter II, Street Fighter II Champion Edition*, and *Street Fighter II Turbo Hyper Fighting*. "Collection Mode," unique to the Generations line, lets players view promo/development materials for the games as well as game introductions/strategies and remixed music.

### darkstalkers 3





The third installment of Capcom's bestselling Darkstalkers series features 14 returnings characters and four new ones. New to the 2D fighting fray are Q-Bee (a Queen bee), Lilith (Morrigan's younger sister), Jedah (Messiah of Darkness... Oh yeah!), and B.B. Hood (Little Red "I pack an Uzi" Riding Hood) and a Visual Story Mode which lets you view a gallery of Darkstalkers pictures. Gameplay consists of the same great 2D gameplay with the amazing depth, infinite replay value, and gorgeous animation you're used to from a Capcom fighting game.

### freestyle boardin '99





Capcom's first venture into PlayStation snowboarding greatness comes in the form of *Freestyle Boardin' '99*. Slam down eight different courses with five unique boarders and execute over 50 gravity-defying tricks. The game offers Championship Mode (cpu opponents), Skill Edit Mode (customize your character by adding points to his attributes), Battle Mode (split screen vs), Slalom Mode (compete straight or free style vs a friend), Half-Pipe Free Mode and Free Style Jumping Contest Mode (score depends on tricks and difficulty).

### megaman legends



Everyone's favorite Capcom super hero gets the 3D treatment for the first time in *Mega Man Legends*. Large 3D environments, detailed storyline, and role-playing elements are just some of the features present in *MML*. There's also animated cut scenes present between the action-adventure sequences of the game.

### pocket fighter





Super-deformed Capcom favorites return to battle it out in this light-hearted fighting game, *Pocket Fighter*, sure to bring a smile to PlayStation owners and Capcom fans alike. Ryu, Ken, and Chun Li join the likes of Felicia, Morrigan, and Hsien Ko to battle it out in super-deformed glory. Unique to this Capcom fighter is the costume combo: pressing a sequence of buttons results in a different, and hilarious, combo every time.

### rival schools





Control any of 14 fighters to defend your high school in *Rival Schools: United by Fate*, because Capcom's hit arcade game is coming to your PlayStation. Tag team combat, "Burning Vigor Attacks" (aerial super chain combos), and brand new characters are just some of the features brought to the table with this game. The 3D polygon characters can also execute special moves, combos, and tag-team super combos (two-on-one attacks).

**Capcom! What more needs to be said? While many were chomping at the bit to play all of their latest fighting ports: Darkstalkers 3, Pocket Fighter, and Rival Schools, there were those of us that were caught drooling on the joypads at the Capcom Generations kiosks (ECM, for instance). Not too many surprises at their booth other than the appearance of yet another snowboarding game—STOP THE INSANITY!!! Megaman Legends looked great and should be available as you read this. The various PS port fighting games all looked good, but, except for Rival Schools, looked like they needed a hand in the animation department. An overall good showing.**

# crave

## n64

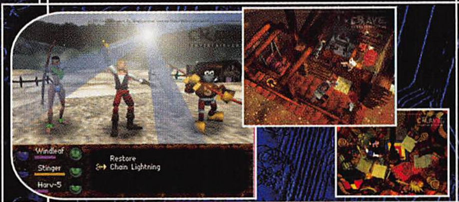
### caesar's palace



From the 'we're still here' development team over at Lobotomy comes Caesar's Palace 64, the first gambling 'sim' on N64. A departure from the corridor antics of past Lobotomy games, CP64 promises to be the best thing going for those that need that gambling fix but can't make it to Vegas or Atlantic City every weekend.

## psx

### shadow madness



Prior to the show, this one was being heralded by many as a potential FFVII killer. Well, I don't know about that, but it certainly show promise. Polygonal characters superimposed over pre-rendered backdrops certainly lend to that FF feel, and the story is none to shabby as well. Not to mention a bunch of cool little mini-games like fishing and a flight sim along with the now prerequisite Dual Shock support.

**While Crave had big plans for the show, they only really had two games to show in any state of real completion: Shadow Madness, their 'FFVII Killer' and Caesar's Palace 64 produced by the ace corridor-meisters over at Lobotomy (a bit of departure for them, don'tcha think?). Shadow Madness is firmly grounded in the FFVII school of game design with pre-rendered backgrounds and polygonal characters completing the presentation. Caesar's Palace 64 should fill that void on the N64 with the gambling 'sim' that everyone's been waiting for. It's certainly been a while since we've seen a game of this ilk, so it should fit the bill nicely.**

# crystal dynamics

## psx

### akuji the heartless




Murdered by his brother the day before his wedding night, Akuji the Heartless fights his way back from the underworld. Use voodoo magic, possession, and hand to hand combat to battle against 30 different enemy types and bosses. Track down the spirits of your ancestors, because you'll need their help to return to the real world and reclaim what is yours.

### gex 3

Gex 3 was shown behind closed doors because the game is still very, very early. You will once again be given the chance to explore 3D environments with everyone's favorite wise-cracking gecko when this game comes out next year. Though it will probably feature less worlds to explore than Gex: Enter the Gecko, Gex 3 gives Gex the ability to ride vehicles (err... a crocodile, snowboard, and mule to be more specific), and Gex's overall appearance will be more suited to the theme of the world (e.g., on the pirate stage, he wears a sailor's hat, has a hook for a hand, a pegleg, and an eyepatch.

### soul reaver




Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver is the incredible sequel to Crystal Dynamics' Legacy of Kain: Blood Omen. This time you play Raziel, a vampiric lieutenant who is brutally punished by Kain. Vowing vengeance for your disfigurement, you explore a free-roaming 3D environment the likes of which have never been seen before. Gorgeous textures, life-like cathedral architecture and cunning enemy AI are already setting Soul Reaver apart from the rest.

### the unholy war




Crystal Dynamics' *The Unholy War* details the epic confrontation between the Arcanes and the advanced Teknos. Peace had reigned for years, but now the two forces are bent on utterly destroying the other side in 3D multi-player combat. The game features fast-paced action, real-time combat, tactical gameplay, special attacks, and battles on the ground and in the air.

**Crystal Dynamics went the off-floor meeting room route and had quite a few nice titles to peruse. Of course there was the mighty Soul Reaver, featuring the continuing exploits of everyone's favorite vampire (though this time you don't play Kain). Akuji the Heartless was also shown in a much more playable form, and featured solid, voodoo-themed 3rd person perspective gameplay. Gex 3 was there but was a bit early. Expect more of what made Gex 2 so great, but not for a bit. The Unholy War rounds out CD's showing with hot, real-time, strategy gameplay. Nice visuals and a great frame rate. Good showing from Crystal D.**

# disney

## psx

### a bug's life



Based on the upcoming feature length film, A Bug's Life was probably one of the biggest surprises at the show for Playstation owners. The game itself was sort of a fusion of the visuals from the upcoming flick and the 3D 3rd person action of Tomb Raider. The game's characters were all nicely done and the engine was very smooth. Definitely one to watch.

**While Disney Interactive didn have much in the way to show a far as console titles went, th one game they did have received rav reviews from just about everybody tha saw it. A Bug's Life featured great 3r person graphics and more than one pe son thought they were looking at a h new PC title, and not just a 'plain old' P game. A fantastic start for Disney an bodes well for any future plans from the neck of the woods.**

# electronic arts

## n64

### madden 99



The rebirth is upon us. Madden 64 was thumped without the NFL license. Madden 99's got it- along with some superb graphics, solid commentary and kinda AI we've come to expect from EA. Check out that play editor; it'll change the way you call plays.

### nascar 99




Better looking than the PlayStation version, NASCAR, on the N64, still has some work to be done on the car physics. 31 current drivers plus legends, from NASCAR past, are there for you to test your skills against. Also included is the music of George Thorogood, Stevie Ray Vaughn (rest his soul) and Satriani. Don't break a tooth opening that beer.

### nhl 99




Oh does this game look sweet! With the best graphics of any N64 hockey game, NHL 99 should dominate the 64-bit console. Like the PlayStation version, there are many new goalie animations, all 27 NHL rinks and 18 international teams. Computer AI has been softened to cut down on the rough play found in the 98 title.

# ea cont.

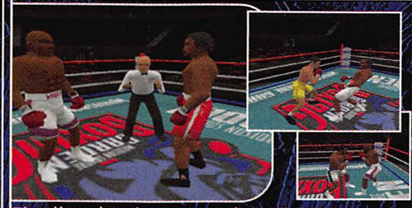
## psx

### dungeon keeper 2



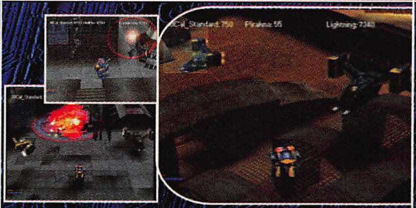
Oh, I hope the PlayStation version comes out as cool as the PC version. Build the best dungeon you can and watch the adventurers come... and perish. More beasties, spells and rooms will give you many new options for disposing of unwanted visitors.

### knock out kings



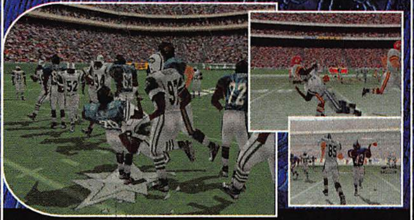
Finally a boxing game is making it to the PlayStation. Oscar De La Hoya and Sugar Ray add the motion capture to a game filled with some of the greats: Holyfield, Ali, Duran and Hagler. Control is still lacking, but hey, the game has Butterbean! What more could you want?

### lapd 2100



It's time to protect and serve... or just blow the bastards away. You are a future cop armed with a prototype mech and some heavy firepower. That won't make things easy, though, because those 22nd century gangs are packin' state-of-the-art, themselves. It's *Strike*, with a mech.

### madden '99



Lookout GameDay; Madden's back... and with a vengeance. Easily the best looking Madden ever, the addition of a custom playmaker, as well as twice as many plays, make Madden 99 a true Monster of the Gridiron.

### moto racer 2



The racing titles just keep on coming. Sweet graphics, a good physics model and some intense gameplay make this one of the best racers of the show. You can race through changing weather conditions and marvel at the real-time lighting effects. Also, this year you'll be able to edit your own tracks!

### nascar 99



The highest selling racing sim on the PlayStation is back for another lap. Improved graphics, 31 drivers and an entirely new physics model make this a stock car fans delight. Dig that night drivin' baby. Still ain't Gran Turismo, though.

### ncaa football



Not just a port, anymore. Taking on a life of its own, NCAA Football 99 is no longer just a Madden supplement. With an expanded dynasty mode, all of the big bowls and a play editor, This is a football must.

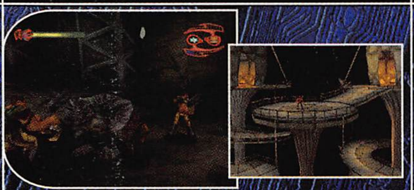
### nhl 99



Oh my, the best keeps on getting better. Only an idiot would pick FaceOff '98 over NHL 98. With all of the improvements, for this years' title, one would have to be even dumber. Coming on the N64, too!

**EA had a sizable fortress worth of titles on display. Everything from EA Sports titles on N64 and PlayStation to movie licenses like Small Soldiers, EA had a lot of games (and that in no way includes the EA/Square games). Nestled in a veritable city, it wasn't hard to see that the most powerful 3rd party on the planet was rocking, nestled in their own 'sim' city. While the focus on console was mostly about a million sports titles, the rare game was shown interspersed amongst them. Games like Small Soldiers, which went a long way to redeeming the 'movie game-itis' of years past. Not to mention hot PC ports like Moto Racer 2 (even faster than the first) and Dungeon Keeper 2 (El Niño and ECM are frothing at the mouth for this one). Yep, EA had something for everybody (aren't clichés grand?), even for people like Waka (well, maybe not for him...). As for EA Sports, well, better sign up for an N64 'cause that's where all the power resides on the sports side of things—not that the PS was looking too shabby. Watch for NHL on N64 as a very strong contender for sports game of the year.**

### small soldiers



Dreamworks is capitalizing on what it hopes will be its most successful film of the summer. Intense 3D action has you controlling everyone from Archer to Chip Hazzard. The game will offer 20 levels of one player action and 15 levels of two-player combat. Let's hope Dreamworks doesn't screw this one up like, well... you know.

### tiger woods 99

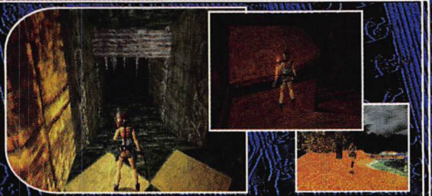


Goodbye *PGA Tour*, hello big-time endorsement. In a move that will give EA's golf franchise a clean slate, *PGA Tour* has been dropped as the namesake and replaced with the name and face of the larger-than-life Tiger Woods. Hope the game plays well...

# eidos

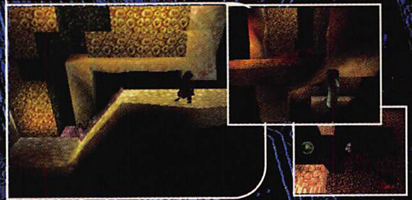
## psx

### tomb raider 3



What really needs to be said about Eidos' favorite daughter? Here she is in her 3rd outing on the PlayStation (and possibly final...though I doubt it). What's new this time out? How 'bout larger environs and hi-res graphics? Yeah, that fits the bill quite nicely. Even though Lara may be getting a little up there in years (so to speak, anyway) TR3 still manages to get the job done quite nicely. Look for her 4th Quarter.

### vermin



In an interesting twist, in Vermin you control one of three organisms burrowing through the decomposing remains of a host human. Eat decaying flesh and lay pupae for later generations to follow. From Kronos, the guys best known for fighters such as Criticom and Dark Rift. A definite change of pace and a solid step towards something original—how nice.

### ninja



Core's Ninja was most prolific at the Eidos booth, playable on several monitors. A cool little ninja game recalling the glory days of arcade Shinobi and other action fare. Don't expect too much in the way of adventure gameplay, as this is straight ahead kill or be killed action. Not that we're complaining, mind you.

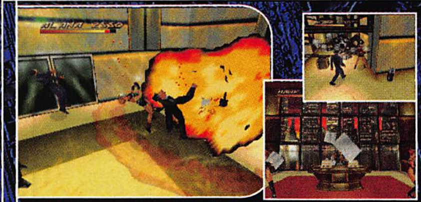
### warzone 2000



Another RTS (real time strategy) game makes its way to the Sony PlayStation in the 3rd Quarter '98. Build and control various droids across 3 campaigns on fully polygonal backgrounds. Looks cool and could be much like Total Annhilation for the PS. Set to give the newest C&C game on PS a run for its money.

## n64

### fighting force 64



What more needs to be said? This is the N64 port of last year's PS '3D Final Fight'. Take to the streets and crack some skulls in full polygonal insanity. All the characters and environs from last year made it over intact, and we're hoping for some exclusives in this latest version. Get ready to hit the street 4th Quarter.

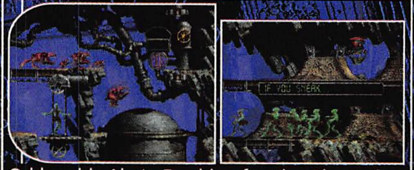
**Remarkably, Eidos didn't totally focus all of its energy on Tomb Raider 3, and spread itself rather well across all of its wares. They had their first N64 game in the form of Fighting Force 64 (could Lara be far away?). Vermin also showed a great deal of promise.**

**As they sat amid all the speculation of whether they were buying Virgin or not, GT had a fantastic show with some really great titles. Abe's Exoddus was at the head of the charge with Dead Ball Zone and Rogue Trip having good showings as well.**

# gt interactive

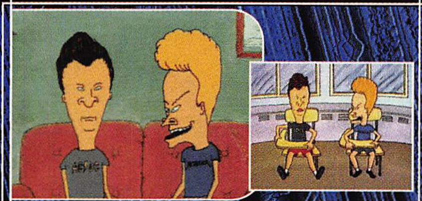
## psx

### abe's exoddus



Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus for the Playstation, was shown on video, and was actually playable behind closed doors. Building on the success of Abe's Oddysee, Abe is back for more adventures, with a whole new bag of tricks. Oddworld has thrown in a ton of additional character features, from advanced character emotions to the ability to possess every last creature in the game. Check out our cover story for the full scoop.

### Beavis and Butthead



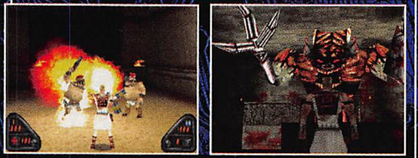
B&B also made an appearance for the Playstation, and man, did it look hilarious. Sweet rendered likenesses running around smacking, kicking, and farting on each other...what more do you need in a game? Oh yeah..the random destruction of property, which is in there, too.

### dead ball zone



Dead Ball Zone was playable at show, and it is looking pretty hot. The player animations are incredible, as are the arenas and light sourcing, and with the exception of one minor glitch, the game play is really good. Could be the best future sports game in a long while.

### duke nukem: a time to kill



Duke Nukem: TTK was playable at the show, and was an interesting twist on the classic series. Duke now plays his role form a very tom Raider-esque position, with some interesting results. The game also had a heavy emphasis on character and level design, as Duke went through some cool and often hilarious changes depending upon his environment.

### rogue trip



Rogue Trip was also on hand, and Single Trac's car combat craziness is still alive and kicking, even if it's under a new name. RT features huge levels and the gameplay that put ST on the map, but the storyline may be a bit too wacky for some gamers. Perhaps it should be more worried with Vigilante 8....

### streak



Streak was also lookin' pretty cool. A mix of of Jet Moto and Road Rash on hoverboards, Streak looks to bring some variety to the racing scene, and with a few tweaks to the engine, it may do just that. As it stood at show, decent light-sourcing and fast gameplay were somewhat hurt by some polygon fallout. Hopefully they can clean it up before release.

# fox

## psx

### alien resurrection



Fox's game based on the movie, *Alien Resurrection*, is a 3rd person action adventure which combines great looking cinematic scenes with the action. Control any of five characters and explore 13 levels of alien blasting anxiety. At least Ripley has hair in this one.

### college hoops




Basketball fans will have more to choose from when College Hoops '99 comes out. Featuring the official NCAA College basketball license, *CH99* has 112 teams, each sporting true college uniforms and logos. Who says it has to be March to play hoops?

### golf '99



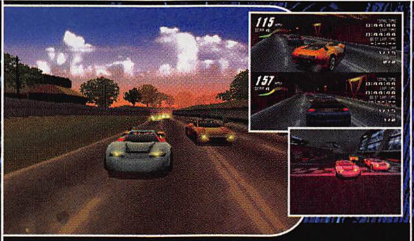
This "easy to pick up and play" golf game, Golf '99, shows promise for golf fans. Choose from different play modes: stroke, match, skins, foursome, and fourball. Try your hand at the driving range, putting range, or course editor.

### hockey '99



Here comes the latest addition to Fox's sports lineup: Hockey '99. All the expected teams with the official NHL license and play modes are here. Throw in true arena music and solid gameplay, and you've got Hockey '99.

### motorhead



Amazingly visuals mark this as a racing game to watch: *Motorhead*. The driving screams fast as environments burn by at a smooth 50 fps. And yes, it supports analog control.

### soccer '99



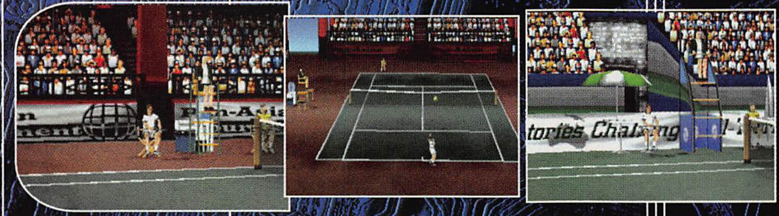
This looks to be Fox's most promising sports title of the bunch: *Soccer '99*. 128 teams, 24 stadiums, and great gameplay are just some of the features in this year's installment. You can also customize your own league, tournament, players, team, or uniform.

### team losi racing



Burn down any of the 15 courses (deserts, beaches, mountain, etc.) in Fox's *Team Losi RC Racer*. Cruise at high speed through slalom-like gates to pick up powerups while driving any of 16 RC cars. There's also a split screen mode to race with your buddy.

### tennis '99



Tennis '99 is here for PlayStation owners. You and a friend can go at it in singles, doubles, or mixed tennis. The game also features commentary from Fox Sports announcers, authentic player movement, and adjustable camera angles.

**Fox Interactive had a very good E3 showing with a monstrous sports line-up set to do battle with the EAs and the Sonys of the world on PlayStation. Everything from soccer to tennis was covered and they seem to be going for the 'whole package' approach. Alien Resurrection also showed up and was looking pretty darn good, although it looked as if it still needed a little tweaking here and there. The whole booth jammed to the tunes of the Crystal Method thanks to their tie-up with N20 (check out the review elsewhere in the issue). An excellent showing overall, but I want to know where the heck the console version of Aliens vs. Predator is. C'mon Fox, you can't just skip the consoles with such an incredible title coming down the line!**

# hasbro

## psx

### battleship



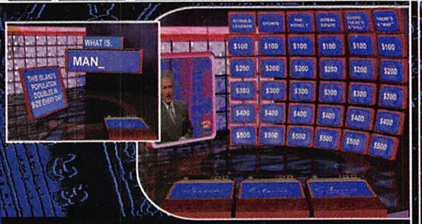
It's time to sink my battleship on the PlayStation. Three different play styles expand upon the classic board game. If you think you've seen Battleship before, think again. Real-time video shows whether you hit or miss, and command fleets equipped with torpedoes, missiles, and NAVCOM surveillance.

### centipede



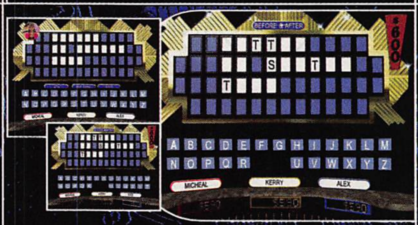
The arcade classic *Centipede* is back, this time with a new 3D look. All those familiar bugs are back for you to blast; and there's different camera angles as well: nostaligic top down, first person, and third person behind Wally. There's also an entirely new Adventure mode, complete with six worlds to explore and a story as well.

### jeopardy



What is "quince?" It's time to put all that bizarre knowledge to use by competing in *Jeopardy*, coming home to your PlayStation. Host Alex Trebek asks for questions and will even offer hints if you need them. Play against the computer or with up to three friends.

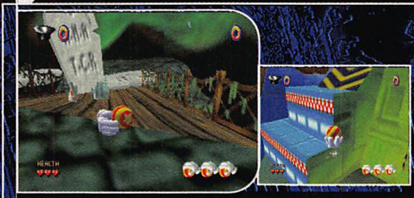
### wheel of fortune



I'd like to buy a vowel. Well, now you can... at home on your PlayStation. Try your hand at solving puzzles alone or with friends in *Wheel of Fortune*, based on the popular television game show.

## n64

### glover 64



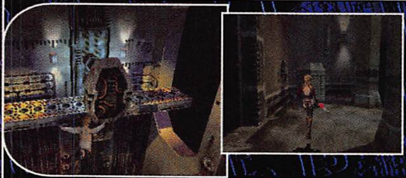
Hasbro's first Nintendo 64 title, *Glover 64*, looks promising. In a magical land, an explosion knocks off a wizard's magical gloves; one glove falls in the evil cauldron, while the other flies out the door. You control Glover, the good glove, and go through a cute, Mario-esque, 3D romp.

**Hasbro managed to be quite the surprise for more than one GF staffer. We walked in, not expecting much from the king of toys, and came away pleasantly surprised. Of special note was Glover 64 starring you as, well, a glove. There was also the pretty cool 3D update of Centipede and the bus that went along with it that we saw rolling around Atlanta constantly. The rest of their titles were solid game show conversions and the ever popular Battleship: "B-6", "Hey, you sunk my battleship!"**

# interplay

## psx

### messiah



Messiah was hiding in the Interplay booth, but was behind closed doors. Talk about keeping a title under wraps. Form what we saw, the game has some definite promise on PC, but it will be interesting to see how it turns out on the Playstation. The Dreamcast version, however, should be another story...

### wild 9



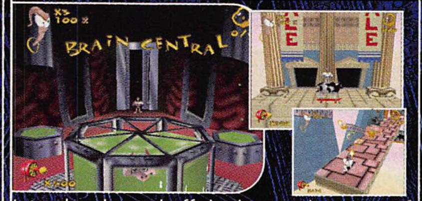
Wild 9, despite any real attention during my tour of the booth, was looking pretty cool, and was an interesting twist on the classic Shiny mold. Awesome character design, eye catching visuals, and the patented Shiny sense of humor could easily make this a sleeper hit upon release.

### earthworm jim 3D



While Jim is leading development on the N64, that doesn' mean that the PlayStation can't get in on the fun too. Looking quite good at the show, it's due out later this year with its N64 compatriot. Watch out for falling cows and various other EWJ craziness.

### earthworm jim 3D



Interplay showed off the latest adventures of everyone's favorite slimy hero with Earthworm Jim 3-D on the Nintendo 64. Jim has made an impressive jump to 3-D, and though there are still a few physics issues being worked out by the guys at Vis Interactive, EWJ 3-D is looking quite promising.

## n64

**Interplay was one of the tougher companies to crack as far as getting in went. If you weren't a member of at least a semi-legit press organization, you weren't going to get in. Once in, though, you got to see games like Heart of Darkness, Wild 9, Messiah, and Earthworm Jim 3D. Talk about a strong showing—looks like that investment in Shiny is paying massive dividends (or at least it will be come the end of the year).**

### heart of darkness



Heart of Darkness finally resurfaced this year, and man-o-man is this platformer looking good.. From some the gang that brought us Out of this World and Flashback are getting back to the roots of the platformer with this title, and we here at GameFan couldn't be more happy with the results. Great character and level design combined with classic gameplay made this one a big hit with the whole crew.

# infogrames

## n64

### gt 64



Race alone or with a friend down circuits of Europe, Japan, or the U.S. in GT 64 Championship Edition. Twelve officially licensed vehicles (including Toyota, Nissan, and Honda) are available to choose from, and are customizable. Each track offers a long and short race for a total of six courses.

### jest



Jest is an adventurous, magical title coming to the N64 courtesy of Infogrames. As Jok, the jester's apprentice, explore eight different worlds such as Hades, Mars, and the Wild West. Featuring a wide variety of enemies, a 3D world, four levels of difficulty, harassing bosses, humor, and the overall sense of adventure... all in one? Surely you jest.

### mission: impossible



Though it will be hard to top *Goldeneye*, *Mission: Impossible* is finally here. Take control of Ethan Hunt in five missions spanning 20 levels, with a wide variety of gadgets and weapons at your possession including dart guns, smoke generators, blow pipes, gas injectors, night vision goggles, and the "face maker." This page will self-destruct in 15 seconds.

### space circus



In Infogrames' new explorer adventure, you control Starshot, a circus juggler. Speak to over 300 characters as you roam the universe going from one zany enironment to another. The seven different universes give the game "the look and feel of an animated feature."

### wetrix



Puzzle gamers will be happy to hear that *Wetrix* is coming, a 3D puzzle game on water coming to the N64. Your goal is to build a dam from randomly falling pieces. Making your job harder are torrential rains, bombs, mines, and torpedoes. There's also Practice Mode, Two-player Mode, Challenge Mode, and Handicap Mode.

## pc

### v-rally championship



PC owners who missed out on V-Rally will get to experience that racing experience in V-Rally 98 Arcade Championship Edition. The action is arcade-fast allowing up to four players to choose from 11 officially licensed rally cars. The game features awesome 3D surround sound.

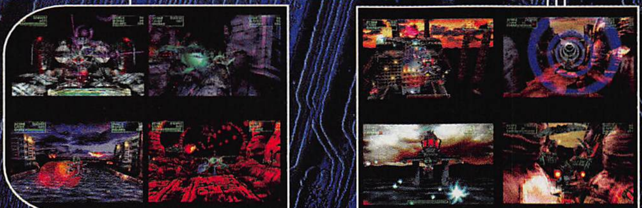
## psx

### snowracer



Hit the slopes in Infogrames' *Snowracer*. Ski, freeride, and snowboard down 15 unique courses, while picking from 12 selectable characters with differing skills and officially licensed equipment such as Dynastar, Nidecker, Dynamic, Burton, Atomic, and Rossignol. Also available are five play modes (Championship, Time Attack, Ghost Mode, Big Air, and Two Player split screen), the "Grizzly 3D" engine, and 20 tricks to perform such as the stalefish, back side air, and chicken salad.

### viper



Viper puts you behind the controls of a helicopter in this 3D flying shootfest. Crush the alien forces with 2D style gameplay, weaving your way through a barrage of bullets at high speed, down canyons, through cities and mines as well. Split paths add yet another aspect to gameplay, in addition to the 15 weapon types and 10 bonus levels.

**Infogrames, the other French software giant at the show (Ubi being the other) had quite a large spread of games to show. First off was the much-delayed, thought-to-be-dead Mission: Impossible. It was looking pretty decent and should be on shelves by the time you read this. One of their bigger and better looking titles was Space Circus. Take control of a cute little proto-typical platform game character and cruise around huge 3D areas on your rocket bike (think Earthworm Jim). What else did Infogrames have that caught our eye? Wetrix was a cool little puzzler that has you trying to drain water from a reservoir before it overflows, as well as a couple of good-looking little PS titles in the wings. No sign, though, of their Looney Tunes games.**

# kemco

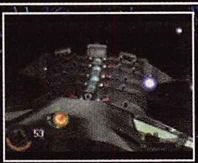
## n64

### charlie blast




An interesting title shown at Kemco was Charlie Blast's Challenge, a funky Bomberman-esque puzzle action game. Running in a spankin' 640x480 high-res mode, you can run around over 60 levels with up to four players. The game looked pretty slick, with nice player animations, and could be a good addition to the growing multi-player line-up for Nintendo.

### knife edge

Next, we have Knife Edge: Nose Gunner, a smooth looking shooter in the vein of Descent where you fly around in a seriously equipped assault craft, blowing the hell out of everything that moves. The game's visuals were pretty impressive, and the engine was surprisingly fast. This one will definitely fill the void for a true 3-D shooter on the Nintendo 64.

### shadow gate 64




And then there was Shadowgate 64, the sequel to the NES classic of old that will soon be arriving on the Nintendo 64. They reassembled the original design team to put this one together, so we should see an enhanced version of the classic original. The version we saw was still a little early, so the jury is still out on this one.

### top gear overdrive




Kemco is also following up another popular title; however, their next title, Top Gear: Overdrive, is actually part of a Nintendo 64 series. This new racer gets Kemco back on the road, literally, as they have gone with a racer very reminiscent of RUSH or EA's NFS. The engine looked good, and will feature tons of goodies from multi-player to rumble pack support, so this one could easily do well on the N64 upon release.

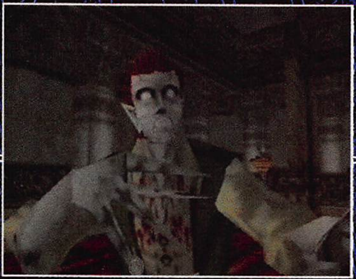
**Kemco was just around the corner from good ol' GameFan at the show, which we passed by about three thousand times a day—good thing they had some solid titles to look at. Top Gear Overdrive is the pseudo-sequel to last year's Top Gear Rally, but this time featuring sports cars. Looked pretty hot, to be quite blunt about it. Knife Edge: Nose Gunner was a cool 3D shooter, but what caught most of the editors' attention was ShadowGate 64, an update of the venerable NES and Turbo CD classic (anybody remember that?). Now, if we could just get a playable version...**

# konami

## n64

### castlevania 64





Behind closed doors, we got a glimpse of the first person view, Belmont-style with whip in hand; and we also saw a werewolf character attacking in human form. In *Castlevania 64* you'll be able to pick from four characters: Schneider Belmont (yes, Schneider, eek), Cornell Reinhardt (the werewolf), Carrie Eastfield (young female magic user), and Kola (chainsaw wielder). Environments are 3D and day/night cycles are also in effect; vampires will be more numerous and powerful if you explore the castle at night.

### deadly arts





*Deadly Arts* is a 3D fighting game with a twist—the ability to create your own fighter and train him as well. Martial arts moves and free roaming 3D environments make this one of the most realistic fighting games on the Nintendo 64. The training mode lets you hone your skills against opponents while learning moves.

### hybrid heaven




Some time next year, Konami's Hybrid Heaven will be astounding N64 gamers with its incredible visuals and real-time movie cut scenes. This action adventure mixes elements of role-playing and exploration. It's up to you, as Johnny Slader to escape the city filled with rampaging, mutant creatures.

### survivor




Survivor is a 3D action/adventure coming to the N64. Konami uses innovative effects such as "skinning" technology and lighting effects with real-time shadows to set a higher level "look" for this N64 title than gamers are used to. Walk, run, climb, crawl, jump, swim, and shoot your way through a variety of bio-spheres including deserts, rainforests, and alpine ranges.

## psx

### bottom of the 9th

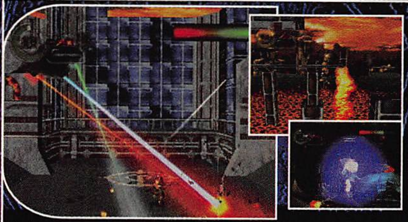



Konami's *Bottom of the 9th '99* wasn't on display, but we did get ahold of more screenshots. This looks like the best installment in the franchise, with improved texture-mapping on the players, amazing renders in the 16 stadiums, faster gameplay, an arcade-style batter/pitcher interface, six play modes, and nine polygon body types. With a higher polygon count, enhanced graphics, and improved play mechanics, *Bottom of the 9th '99* is sure to make waves.

# konami

## psx

### c-contra adventure



C: A Contra Adventure mixes 2D and 3D elements but keeps the action intense throughout. This one's got side-scrolling, top-down, and over-the-shoulder perspectives. This 32-bit Contra is chock full of weapons and enemies to blast, and will surely have something for everyone to enjoy.

### g-shock



G Shock takes gamers underwater for adventures through caves, shipwrecks, and open sea exploring. Your goal is to hunt for treasure which you barter for better equipment, which lets you explore deeper into the ocean environment. Discovering items and meeting characters influences the plot, and there's multiple endings to boot.

### kensei: sacred fist



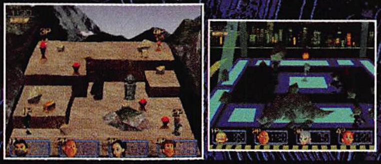
Konami's first fighting game for the PlayStation, Kensei: Sacred Fist, features polygon characters and arcade-quality action. The guard button blocks attacks and lets you spin to the back of your opponent—allowing countering combinations. Play modes include training, time attack, and survival mode.

### metal gear solid



At last year's E3, the videotape of Metal Gear Solid blew everyone away. This year, it was playable; and a new videotape was on display showing more of the bosses. Command Snake Solid, a killing machine, and infiltrate the enemy base using only your bare hands and any weapons you can find. Tremendous attention to detail, incredible play options (use a guard as a human shield; sneak around in a cardboard box), sneaking around, etc. set this 3D action/adventure up to be the game to beat this year.

### poy poy 2



When Poy Poy came out for the PlayStation, it had that one element which so many games were missing: fun. Now Poy Poy 2 is here with more characters (16), more 3D battlegrounds (10), more power gloves (23), and more overall fun. Get together a large group of friends for a wacky, wild, toss-your-friend-around, and most importantly... new Poy Poy experience.

### silent hill



Silent Hill could be the sleeper game of the show. This 3D gothic thriller does an amazing job of spooking the player. From the opening moments of the game when you awaken from a car crash to find your daughter missing and a deserted town, Silent Hill develops a horrifically dark atmosphere with eerie music, dim environments, and ghastly creature design. The expressions on the characters' faces in the CG scenes are more realistic than anything you've ever seen before in a game.

**Konami really didn't need anything other than Metal Gear Solid to steal the show, but they managed to bring along a few other titles worthy of mega-coverage. Sleeper title of the show had to go the amazing Resident Evil-esque Silent Hill. Fully polygonal and eerie as they come, each and every GameFan ed was raving about this one. See the Top Ten of show for more coverage on Metal Gear Solid and Silent Hill. Poy Poy 2 also received a great deal of attention and managed to garner a top spot as well. The rest of their titles were respectable as well with Castlevania 64 and Hybrid Heaven looking quite excellent in the early going. It would certainly seem that the Konami of old is back...and that's putting it more than a little mildly.**

# mgm interactive

## psx

### tomorrow never dies



The latest in the Bond series of games, this time from Black Ops and MGM. Taking a few cues from Goldeneye (with its sniper scope) and adding in some multi-format play a la Die Hard Trilogy, it looks set to deliver some intense spy-themed action to the PS this fall.

### tiny tank




It could be more aptly titled Return Fire II, but even without it, it's a hot little action-strategy game. Take command of various units from a 3rd person perspective and take to the various polygonal environs in do-or-die missions: co-op, vs., and single player modes round out the experience.

### wargames



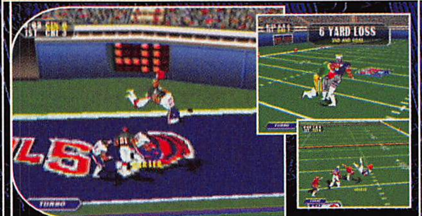
Take the controls of, what else, a Tiny Tank! Tool around level after level in a semi-super-deformed tank out to wreak some havoc. Good graphics and very solid gameplay round out this hot little title.

**For their first E3, MGM Interactive had a number of good games coming down the line for Sony's wonderbox. The focus was obviously quite heavily centered on the Black Ops' produced Tomorrow Never Dies, based on the latest film in the Bond series. It looked solid, and had the full-on MDK/Goldeneye-esque zooming sniper rifle. They also had Wargames on hand for a little bit more exposure before it hits the streets. The one game that had a whole bunch of editors talking, though, was Tiny Tank. Take to the controls of a super-deformed tank blasting baddies as you go. Reminded us a great deal of the tank sequences in StarFox 64, with 'go-anywhere' gameplay.**

# midway

## n64

### blitz



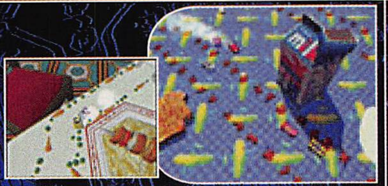

NFL Blitz was on hand, and looked great. This was easily one of the better arcade ports at the show, and looks to be a big hit in the multi-player arena for Midway. If you loved the arcade version, Blitz will make you a happy camper.

### gex 64



Gex 64 was also playable at the show, and it looks to be a good choice for platformer fanatics this fall. All the humor and gameplay of the PlayStation version will be leaping our way, and it should be interesting to see how this one stacks up to the likes of Banjo Kazooie and Conker's Quest.

### micro machines v3



Micro Machines V3 for the Nintendo 64 was also chillin' at the Midway booth, and it looked pretty slick. Nintendo fans will finally get a chance to see what all the buzz was about on the PlayStation earlier this year. Rumble Pak support and multi-player action are just two small parts of what make this miniature monster one to watch.

### offroad challenge



OffRoad Challenege was also on hand, and it was one of the best console racers at show. If you enjoyed the arcade version, you will be in a state of gaming glee over the improved control, and the visuals hold up nicely as well. Multi-player support and rumble pack compatibility are also a big plus. A pleasant surprise.

### stunt copter rc



Stunt Copter RC rounded out this year's lineup, and looks to be an interesting move for the arcade action oriented gang at Midway. Much like Pilot Wings before it, SCRC will have a focus on simulation, rather than action, and should be a refreshing break from the slew of action and advaenture titles slated for release on the Nintendo 64 this year.

**Midway had a respectable showing with Stunt Copter RC leading the charge—Interplay's loss is definitely Midway's gain. NFL Blitz brought the arcade antics of everybody's favorite NBA Jam-style gameplay to the gridiron. Another big title from Midway was Code Masters Micro Machines V3, based on the PS version that saw a release late last year. And of course there was the racing exploits of Offroad Challenge, based on the ol' reliable Cruis'n USA engine. All in all, a good showing from the fine folks at Midway.**

# namco

## psx

### pacman 3d



Pac-Man 3D??? Some would call that atrocious, but if you look at the beautiful graphics, play in the large environments, and marvel at Pac-man's humorous quirks, that same great fun nostalgia of Pac-Man is found here. As Hometek's (Namco of America's in-house development team) first title, it plays and looks great, and while only four levels were playable, Pac-Man 3D will be a game that everyone can enjoy in early '99.

### tales of destiny



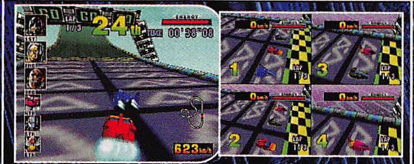
The sequel to the awesome Tales of Phantasia for the Super Famicom, Tales of Destiny features huge monsters, grand areas of exploration, and plenty of adventure in this action/RPG. Selling over 800,000 units since it was released in Japan in December, Tales of Destiny will be ported to the U.S. hopefully in September.

**Namco had a small but solid showing with Pac Man 3D and Tales of Destiny, along with the arcade sequel to Soul Edge in the form of Soul Calibur. Oh, and Pac Man 3D looked surprisingly good.**

# nintendo

## n64

### f zero x



Shigeru Miyamoto has been waiting for a system powerful enough to do a sequel to his blazing fast futuristic racer F-Zero on the SNES. Now with the N64 comes F-Zero X, and this baby is running fast at 60fps and plays oh so good. With Rumble Pak jolting with every turbo thrust and the ability to play with four players, look for this game to come out late August of '98.

### zelda toot



One of the most beloved series in video game history debuts November 23rd of '98. Zelda: The Orcarina Of Time plans to take the gaming world by storm with all new features that Miyamoto has promised "is unlike any other game available." With a unique combat system, superb graphic detail, and worldly environmental settings ranging from deep canyons to dark dungeons. Once again, Shigeru Miyamoto has blessed us again.

**Nintendo had a very strong showing—would you expect anything less from the company that had Zelda: Ocarina of Time, Twelve Tails and F-Zero X on display? Expect massive coverage in the near future, Nintendo-ites.**

### twelve tails



So you might call Conker's Quest another Mario clone with a cute smiling squirrel, eh? Well be that as it may, Conker's Quest: Twelve Tails not only looks better (with some spectacular special effects), but also offers two player simultaneous playing as well as increased interaction with the environment. Also, your character has mood swings depending upon certain events that happen during the game. While no date is really specified, Conker's Quest: Twelve Tails is looking to drop sometime in '98.

# psygnosis

## psx

### colony wars: vengeance



The sequel to the popular 3D space shooter, *Vengeance* remedies all of the problems with the original. A truly enjoyable action game with some of the best graphics of anything, on the PlayStation.

### formula 1 '99



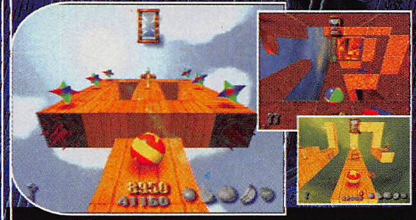
More racing from Psygnosis. Hop in your F1 car and tear it up across the sport's most famous speedways. Still has that killer AI and gnarly crashes. A totally new engine is being implemented this time around.

### global domination



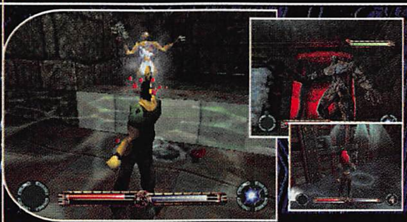
Part strategy, part action game, all fun, GD has you locking horns with the other leaders of the world for total domination of Earth. Slowly usurp the countries around you, using a variety of tactics. Or, just roll in with your armies and take it by force. Watch out you don't piss off the wrong people, though, because you might find yourself fighting a two-front war.

### kula world



One of the most innovative games at the show, Kula was a El Niño's favorite. You play a beach ball that must cruise around interconnecting girders, avoiding spikes and trying not to fall off. Collect keys to advance to the next level. As addictive as *Tetris*.

### o.d.t.



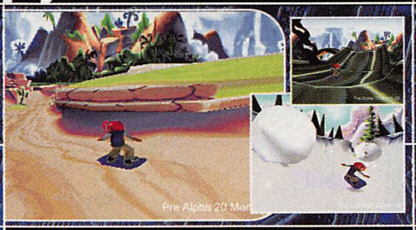
Or Die Trying... A 3D action adventure, O.D.T. has made some giant strides since the last time we saw it. This game is shaping up nicely and could cap off a solid Psygnosis line-up. Still are some control problems, though.

### pro 18



Another golf sim for the mix. Pro 18 is licensed and features golfers such as Tom Lehman and Collin Montgomerie. The game will utilize a four-click swing meter and include changing weather and commentary by Peter Arliss and ESPN's Mike Turrico.

### psybadek



Hoverboards and kids with attitudes. 47 levels of boarding madness, numerous trick attacks and enemies like Psycho Penguins make this an interesting title, to say the least.

### sentinal returns



All you have to know is that John Carpenter scored it... that's enough for me. Based on the popular '80s game, this strategy game will feature over 600 levels of competition! Majorly adictive gameplay and...did I mention... music by John Carpenter!

### spice girls

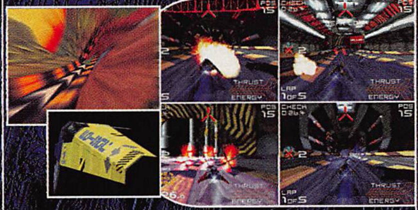


Think *Parappa the Rappa* with less talent. The most annoying (and untalented) musical group since the New Kids now have their own game. Not a competitive game, mostly all you do is listen to them sing and watch them interact. You'd think with all of their money, they'd have gotten some dental work.

**Psygnosis had a phenomenal show. Just about everything they had on display was stellar looking, with perhaps the exception of Spice Girls (whatever will they do without Geri?), and even that looked pretty good. Some of the more stand-out titles they had on display were Colony Wars: Vengeance, the outstanding sequel to last year's knock-out space shooter; Kula World, featuring sentient beach ball mania (don't ask, just play it, it's excellent); Global Domination, a new twist on the real-time strategy genre, and their first Nintendo 64 game with Wipeout 64. They easily had one of the best outings at the show and this wrap-up doesn't even begin to scratch the surface of what they also happened to show on PC (all you PC-haters aren't going to be hating them for long, that's for sure).**

## n64

### wipeout 64



One of the best racing titles ever is now coming to the N64. The graphics are great and the gameplay is flawless. Developers are still working on the draw-in and the sound isn't nearly as cool as in the Saturn and PSX versions.

# sony

## psx

### bust a groove





While Parappa can undeniably rap, can he shake his bootie to save his life? I didn't think so! Bust A Groove is the next innovative step to Parappa the Rapper in which instead of rapping, you press a sequence of buttons to perform a certain dance move. This is done in time to the tunes, and with 10 unique performers, each with their own style, you'll be bobbing you're head when this title comes out this fall in the U.S.

### cardinal syn



CS features interactive bg elements that you want to avoid, as well as weapon power-ups during battle. Select from 18 different characters, each proficient with such weapons as longswords, maces, axes, as well as assorted magic attacks. Winning a match is rewarded with a gory evisceration of the enemy, much like the MK series.

### cool boarders 3



Set to slide in October '99, Coolboarders 3 looks to rectify the small minor flaws that number 2 had. The result is a boarding environment with no graphical flaws like pixellation, pop-up, or drop out. With a whopping 20 snowboarders to choose from, as well as 23 authentic snowboards to thrash, you can also fight other snowboarders while racing.

### crash 3: warped



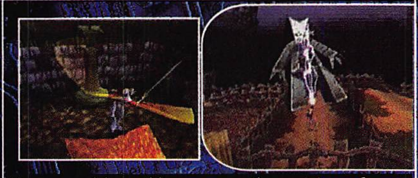
Oh no... when November 1998 comes around, run over hills, climb high mountains, and swim through blue lakes to reach you're nearest video game retailer. That's when Crash Bandicoot 3: WARPED releases stateside, and not only is it bigger with a lot more funny elements added, Crash's sister, Coco, follows our brave bandicoot to once again, stop the diabolical plans of Dr. Neo Cortex.

### jersey devil



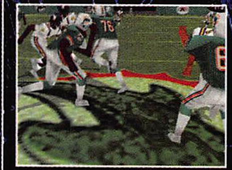
Who says good guys wear white? Don't they know they wear..uh, purple? Jersey Devil, set to release June '98, stars our impish hero suited up in purple as he tries to exact his revenge against the evil Dr. Knarf. With a bizarre cast of enemies and puzzles to stump the most seasoned sleuth, this title looks to surprise us all.

### medievil



How would you like some evil magician of sorts to turn the world into a dark evil place? Sir Dan Fortesque will have none of that and from his grave, he awakens to put an end to the sorcerer Zorak's evil reign. With a rich gothic theme, detailed 3D visuals, and some dark humor, MediEvil is an interesting action/adventure game that will arrive on Halloween of '98.

### nfl gameday 99



NFL GAMEDAY 99

The biggest-selling sports game of 1997 returns again to defend it's crown as the best football game on the market. Slated for September '98, NFL Gameday '99 features commentaries from Dick Enberg and Phil Simms, and that's not all. The realism has been upped to lifelike actions such as QB's throwing off their backfoot as well as defenses floating in their zone defenses.

### nfl x-treme



Sony's answer to NFL Blitz, NFL Xtreme is a fast paced five-on-five football fest, that involves mainly trash-talking, victory dancing, taunting, helmet popping... you know, all those great elements in football. Available July 15th, the game features 30 NFL teams, stadiums, and banners, as well as 400 polygons per player.

### nhl faceoff '99



Coming this October, NHL FaceOff '99 looks to impress with its cleaned-up visuals and faster engine. This game delivers 25 percent more polygons per player. Motion capturing actual NHL players gives FaceOff some incredibly realistic movement, and all the standard quality moves NHL FaceOff always provides.

### rally cross 2





Rally Cross One was great though it had issues of difficulty... (*Not to me! --Reubus*) the difficulty of not rolling your car over. Well, Rally Cross 2 has solved that problem, making it much easier to drive. Rally Cross 2 new features include real time reflection mapping, environmental effects of mud and slush decorating your car, and customization of cars, which include suspension, paint styles, and tire types.

### spyro





With rich, colorful settings, magical landscapes, and a small hero, Spyro the Dragon looks to steal the hearts of all gamers. The malicious Gnasty Gnorc has cast a spell on all dragons of the land, and it's up to you Spyro, the youngest of dragons, to free them all. With SCEA, Universal Interactive Studios Inc, and Insomniac Games, Inc working on this title, look for this delightful surprise September '98.

### syphon filter



With Metal Gear Solid coming out, very few games look to contend with its popularity, though Syphon Filter may be a huge obstacle. With its real-time 3D visuals, CIA-like arsenal, lifelike animation, and intricate puzzles, this game looks to compete head to head with MGS, as you play an agent of a counter-terrorism agency. Look for this title to come out November.

# sony cont.

## tomba



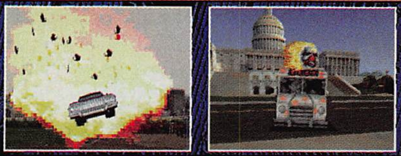
The world has been taken over by evil pigs (yes, literally "oinking" pigs) and it's up to Tomba to stop them all. While 2D platform games are rare, Tomba is going to show that 2D platforming is here to stay. With unique enemies, interesting weapons, and a great sense of humor, look for Tomba to bound into stores July 1998.

## turbo prop racing



If you ever been suicidal enough to strap a turbo fueled engine on your back to race other boats, I salute you... I'd rather get the same feeling with Turbo Prop Racing. Race ten other 40-foot watercrafts from around the world, feeling each bump and turbo rush with the Dual Shock Pad. Scheduled for Summer of '98, get ready for some wet racing action.

## twisted metal 3



The incredible popular Twisted Metal series received its third installment, and it's looking to upset the competition. With realistic physics ranging from tire burning powerslides to realistic aerial vehicle collision, Twisted Metal 3 gives the TM fanatic more of the great goodness that it started with, including eight new battlegrounds, a dozen different vehicles, and a whole slew of weapons.

**As Sony continues to crush the competition under its steel-toed boots with fantastic games and insane marketing muscle, it's nice to see that it's at least for a good reason. Witness the hot line-up of titles Sony has slated for the rest of the year and it's easy to see why they're in the driver's seat (though Nintendo may have something to say about that). From the fantastic looking Spyro the Dragon and Crash 3 to the intense Twisted Metal 3 and Rally Cross 2 from Sony's own Studio 989, they had everybody covered. Sports titles to die for—with the awesome NFL Xtreme at the helm—show that they're more than ready to take the 4th quarter by storm. And let us not forget the cool and quirky MediEvil and Bust A Groove and the tactical action of Syphon Filter (weird name, eh?). Yep, life is good at camp Sony. BTW, if you don't have a PS yet, what are you waiting for?!**

# square soft

### psx

## brave fencer musashiden



Take control of Musashi in Brave Fencer Musashiden, an action RPG from the company that brought you Final Fantasy VII. Slice monsters, learn skills, and solve puzzles in 3D environments. The game features real-time combat and environments which reflect day and night.

## bushido blade 2



Prepare to slice, parry, and swing your sword in the sequel to the most realistic sword-fighting game ever in Bushido Blade 2. 20 characters, new fighting styles, moves, weapons, subweapons, and open 3D environments are just some of the draws. There are no life bars, time limits, or supers to worry about in this fighting game. It's just you and your sword. One wrong move will be your last.

## final fantasy VIII



Final Fantasy VIII was not viewable on the E3 show floor. However, at a press conference the day before, the game was announced to come out late 1999 in America. Astounding CG movies, breathtaking pre-rendered bgs, 3D characters created by Tetsuya Nomura (of FF7 and Parasite Eve fame), and music by Nobuo Uematsu are just some of the elements which make up this blockbuster. A playable demo will be packaged with Squaresoft's Brave Fencer Musashiden, set for November.

## parasite eve



Countless gamers and media in attendance at E3 were wowed by the CG cut scenes of Squaresoft's Parasite Eve, a cinematic RPG. You'll feel like you're playing through a movie as you control Aya, a New York cop, trying to solve the mystery behind Melissa's "sickness" and the recent outbreak of spontaneous combustion in the city. Combat is real time, like Resident Evil 2, but with a turn-based aspect as well. Throw in Square CG (better than FF7) and you'll see why gamers are excited about this title.

## xenogears



Xenogears is Squaresoft's return to its classic RPG roots. Storyline is the main emphasis in this game, although the 20 full minutes of CG cel animation and fully explorable 3D environments may distract you. Control "Gears" (large, mechanical robots) in combat; and experiment with the learned combo system which lets you customize your combos.

**After the recent formation of EA/Square, they announced four titles for initial release: and they were all at E3. While each of the games was in various states of translation with Parasite Eve and Xenogears the farthest along, it was quite clear that we're probably going to be getting each and every Square title produced in the future—rejoice with us! Brave Fencer was looking good, but the big news for that title was the inclusion of a Final Fantasy VIII demo disk along the lines of the one included with Tobal No. 1 in the US. Will it make it over here with the US release of Brave Fencer? Only time will tell.**

# thq

## n64

### penny racers



Choro Q finally hits the States! Reubus can't wait! This game has all the elements: 9 courses, 14 cars, a vast array of upgrades and a custom track designer. Penny Racers supports up to four players. A fun racing title, all-around.

### rugrats



Next year the N64 will see its own version of the Rugrats game. Fifteen levels, plus bonus rounds, are there for you to explore. This 3D adventure could become as popular as the emmy winning t.v. show!

### wcw/nwo revenge



Where, oh where, has Jimmy Superfly Snuka gone? The soap-opera storylines of these organizations have gotten way out of control. If only they somehow could be translated into the game... now THAT would be something...

## psx

### brunswick bowling



Adrenalin's follow-up to Ten Pin Alley. An excellent bowling sim that is sure to entertain all. Much easier to control than TPA, Brunswick lets you create your own bowler or choose from one of 11 real pros.

### dead unity



Another Terminator knock-off, *Dead Unity* takes place in a world where the machines have taken over. This 3D action game will throw over 30 types of enemy at you, but gives you over 100 weapons with which to blast them. Also features multiple endings and non-linear play.

### devil dice



A sleeper hit. Devil Dice is a brain-busting puzzle game that has you rolling dice around in order to match up the numbers. Connect three 3s, four 4s, etc... to make them disappear. Very addictive.

### g-darius



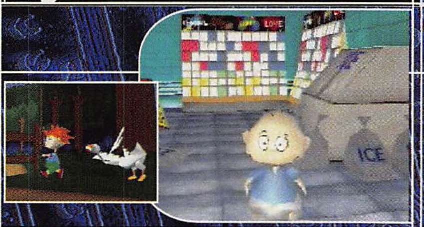
A shooter fan's wet dream. Fifteen huge levels with 30 bosses keep your palms sweating. Two-player simultaneous is a blast, too. If things get too easy, just kick the difficulty up a notch: there are eight settings.

### rally champ



Another rally game to clog the system. You can use 9 cars on, get this, 60 tracks! Also, there is a track editor and several secret courses and vehicles. The cars handle well and the graphics and sound are exemplary.

### rugrats



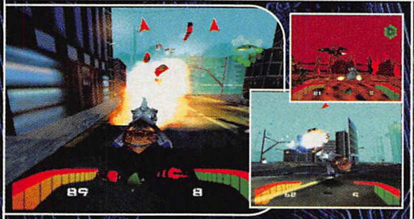
The potato-headed kids are now playable! Cruise around the Pickles' home with any of your favorite Rugrats characters, like Chuckie, Tommy or Angelica. Good fun for the younger gamer.

### shao lin



3D fighting game that allows up to four players simultaneously. Twelve playable characters, six martial arts styles and a quest mode are the selling points. This game still needs some work though; it plays too stiff.

### speed tribes



Motorcycle mayhem in the future. In the same vein as Road Rash, Speed Tribes has you riding air bikes, offing your opponents with a heavy arsenal of weapons. Choose from any of the six biker gangs, to compete.

### wcw/nwo live



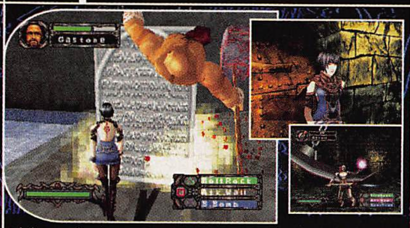
The wrestling phenomena just won't end. Wolfpack followers everywhere will be frothing at the mouth to get ahold of this newest installment. More pile driving and top-rope antics abound. O.K., I enjoyed it.

**Few companies have made as startling a turn-around as THQ. Reviled by hard core gamers during the 16-bit era, they've made a complete 180 and look to be one of the places to look towards for some of Japan's hotter fare. Leading the pack were Devil Dice (XI in Japan), Taito's G-Darius (see last issue for that one), and Reubus' reason for living, Penny Racers 64 (a.k.a. Choro Q 64). Beyond these super-hot prospects, they also showed a new WCW game that utilizes the engine from the latest version of New Japan Pro Wrestling—talk about making all the right moves. As well, they had some decent looking US-bred fare in the form of Speed Tribes and Dead Unity (Resident Evil-inspired gameplay). Yep, it's kinda' frightening how far they've come in so little time.**

# tecmo

## psx

### deception II



Although there is a Monster Rancher 2 in the works, this is Tecmo's one announced title, for the rest of the year. The sequel to Deception, Kagero is another 3D, 1st person game where you set traps to kill your enemies. What Deathtrap Dungeon should've been.

**It was pretty quiet and reserved over at the Tecmo booth with Dead or Alive still commanding some attention. The main focus at the show for them was Deception II, the follow up to one of PlayStation's big sleeper titles. Replacing the first person perspective of the first with a 3rd-person, Tomb Raider-inspired one was a good idea, especially in Eggo's book.**

# titus

## n64

### roadsters



Take that dream roadster for a nice FAST Sunday drive along the country, and you've basically got the gist of Roadsters '98. With eight different tracks, and interactive effects such as smoke trails, skidding, and weather changes, Roadsters '98 also allows four player compatibility. Race to your stores in November '98 for this title.

### superman



The Man of Steel comes home on the N64, complete with all his superhuman abilities: heat vision, X-ray vision, super breath, etc. You play Superman as you try to stop Lex Luthor and three other baddies from taking over Metropolis. With interactive environments and four player support, look for this mighty title in October '98.

**When you have the Man of Steel in your booth, what more do you really need? The game based on the animated exploits of everyone's favorite super hero (well, of those that didn't grow up on X-Men and Spawn at least). Fight your way through massive 3D levels in a 3rd person perspective using fists and heat vision to show 'em who's boss. Titus also had Roadsters, a follow up to Automobili Lamborghini utilizing the same engine and looking pretty solid. Now where's my sequel (2D NOT 3D) to Prehistorik Man?! Do I have to beg?**

# virgin

## psx

### c&c retaliation



Westwood came packing some Command and Conquer lovin' with C&C: Retaliation. This version of C&C is not a direct port of the PC version, but will include some brand-spankin' new footage, link cable compatibility, and a few new missions. Real Time Startegy fans should mark this one down, as it is about as good as it got at this year's show for Playstation owners.

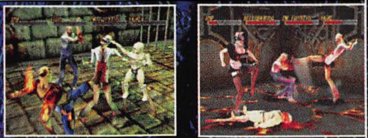


### pscr



They hit the starting gate with their upcoming speed freak Professional Sports Car Racing. This one has a heavy focus on realism, and sports some slick visuals and top licensing to boot. Perhaps the most interesting feature of this title is that they have actually taken the time to program in the AI for various cars on the Exxon Supreme GT racing series, which Virgin sponsors. So we should see some serious competition on that end.

### thrill kill



Their biggest surprise was the four-player fighter, Thrill Kill. This game was a nice mix of Poy Poy, Tekken, and a trip to the neighborhood looney-bin. The game looked and played very well, actually doing a good job of pulling off the battle royale style it was presenting, and even managed to have a few cool features outside of that. TK was probably the most underrated fighter at the show, so if this is your bag, be sure to keep your eye on this one.

### viva soccer



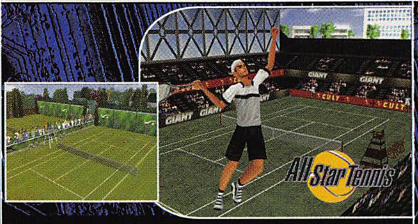
Virgin sported yet another soccer title for the Playstation crowd in the form of VIVA Soccer. VS will make sure you get all the options soccer fans demand, with over 900 teams, 16,000 players, close to 2,000 different uniforms, 250,000 different player attributes, and developers say the AI will be the best yet in a Playstation Soccer title. Hopefully it will be able to compete with the likes of World Cup '98 upon release this fall.

**While Virgin was one of the hot topics of the show for the rumors surrounding who was going to purchase them (GT Interactive is the rumored front-runner), they also managed to sneak some hot titles into the show. By far, the most surprising title they had on display was Thrill Kill, a hot new four-player fighter and potentially the best one at the show. Beyond that they had the follow-up to C&C: Red Alert with C&C: Retaliation. Rounding out their solid showing was PSCR (Professional Sports Car Racing) and Viva Soccer. I'm not sure about you but I think we could all do with a few less racing and soccer titles (not that Virgin's were any less worthy than the others, but...). Overall it was a good show and probably Virgin's last as an independent entity.**

# ubisoft

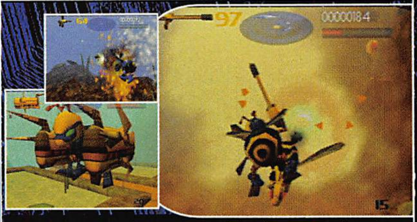
## n64

### all star tennis




Finally a tennis sim on the N64. Extensive motion capture and a solid physics model makes the game look and play well. The addition of eight world-class players, including Michael Chang, as well as a handful of international courts give the game flavor.

### buck bumble



You play a cyborg bumble bee out for justice! Crush the mutant insects in this fully 3D enviroment. Fly around, doing barrel rolls, nose dives and other aerial antics. A fun adventure with much to offer for the experienced gamer, as well as the initiate.

### hype



A game based on Playmobils!! One of the world's coolest toys now has its own adventure game. Play Hype, a sword-wielding knight who must defeat the Black Knight. The game includes puzzle solving, fighting, and tournament challenges.

### rayman 2



Ubi Soft's flagship title, Rayman, will give Mario and Banjo a run for their money. One of the best looking games we've ever seen, this wacky platform title really shows what the N64 is capable of. On the Nintendo Calender, this is the Year of the 3rd Party.

### scars



Super Computer Animal Racing Simulation... whatever. *SCARS* is a racing sim that tries to differentiate itself from the pack by giving each car an animal motif. Nothing more than another racing combat game with homing missiles flying.

### tonic trouble



Those crazy Frenchmen are at it again. This bizarre action game is a cross between Rayman and Izzy. Some nice visuals and intuitive control make Tonic Trouble a joy to play. What I want to know, though, is what do the French have against characters with arms and legs?

## psx

### all star tennis




More Ubi Soft tennis. Eight world-class players highlight this solid tennis title. A good physics engine as well as a wide variety of motion capture bring this game to life. The graphics are good and the control is better than in most tennis sims.

### chaos



*Chaos* is the working title on a game that needs some serious working. Too early to tell you much more than the storyline. You are the last of the Chaos Squad and you must stop the Vargan troops from destroying your way of life. A 3D action game with strategy elements.

### rayman 2



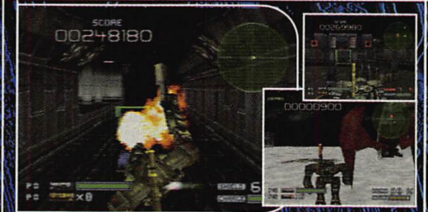
A truly beautiful game, this 3D platform game will astound, with its ambient sound and stunning visuals. One of the best games of the entire show, Rayman 2 raises the bar on the platform genre. Those Frenchies sure have a good sense of style.

### scars



Another racing combat game, S.C.A.R.S. offers little in innovation. Your standard compliment of tracks and power-ups are visually augmented by some nice lighting. Nine cars, modeled after certain animals, are available to race.

### shadow gunner



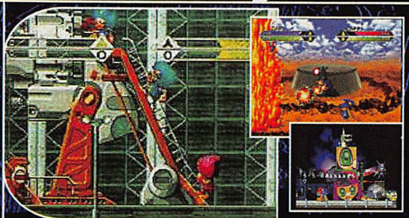
Another 3-D mech game. While Shadow Gunner offers little in the way of originality, it manages to hold its own. Some great graphics, marrow-cracking sound and cool enemies make this game a fun romp. Dig those weapons... they be baaad.

**Ubi Soft certainly had a most prolific showing at E3. Boasting a hoard of new titles, and the most 'humans dressed up like game characters' of the show, they were there to impress—and they didn't fail. They really didn't show anything, console-wise, beyond Rayman 2 which looked absolutely stunning and even caught the eye of a Mr. Shigeru Miyamoto (we spied him herding the Ubi programmers to a back room at one point). Along with Tonic Trouble and a whole legion of other titles, Ubi Soft is one of the companies to look out for in the very near future.**

# working designs

## psx

### silhouette mirage



Although Saturn owners won't be getting this one, at least somebody will. The 2D, Treasure-spawned antics of SM will hit the PS later this year with a new boss to boot.

### thunder force 5



One of the best shooters to hit the import Saturn finds its way to PS owners in the US. A solid translation from the original, look for a new level and new cinemas for its PS debut.

### elemental gearbolt



A gun game with a fantasy flair, Elemental Gearbolt was welcomed with open arms by all the Time Crisis junkies at the show. A solid title from the folks at Far East.

### lunar



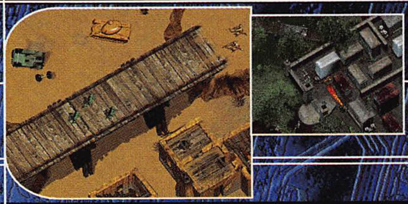
Lunar will finally get its first crack at a wide audience when it debuts in August. Expect lavish praise when it does hit. We await this one with a fair modicum of reverence.

**Working Designs showed up at the show in their first-ever actual booth of their own. They had a great lineup of PS titles and one lone Saturn title in the shape of Magic Knight Rayearth (yes it's coming in July...they promise). Unfortunately whenever someone from GameFan dropped by, the Saturn was on the fritz, <sigh>. Anyhow, you can thank them for finally getting some of the top import Saturn titles over here, even if it is on Sony's PS. We've already taken Thunder Force 5 around the block, and even though it isn't a one-for-one port of the Saturn rev, it's about as good as shooting action gets on the PlayStation.**

# 3do

## psx

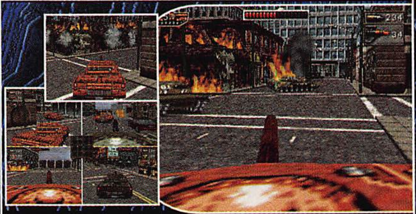
### army men



First up is Army Men 3D, a 3rd person action version of the recently released PC action/strategy title. The version we saw was still WAAAAY early, but all the goodies were basically in place. You control a green soldier called Sarge and have a variety of weapons and abilities in your quest to blast the tan.

**3DO, the company that once figured that the 32-bit generation would never fly, had a bevy of good titles on hand. Uprising, based on the recent PC title, was on hand, as was TOCA Touring Car Championship (what's with the recent fascination with touring car games?). Army Men was also on hand, but in very early form. Make sure to keep them away from magnifying glasses. Surprisingly enough, 3DO also had a single N64 game on show in the form of Battle Tanx. It reminded more than one passer-by of Namco's Tokyo Wars and looked to be one of the better tank games on its way (Tiny Tank being the other). A solid outing for the ex-hardware company.**

### battle tanx



3DO's lone Nintendo 64 title, BattleTank, was an interesting twist on the classic tank combat theme with some mad multi-player skills. Granted, some kid at the booth kept beating the hell out of me, but the game really excels in 4 player mode. The levels themselves were also pretty slick, allowing you to blow up every single on-screen object to get to your opponents. Too cool.

### toca



Last up at 3DO was their new Playstation Racer, TOCA Touring Car Championship. This one featured a fast engine, full analog and dual shock support, and a ton of licensing. It should be interesting to see how it stacks up to the rest of the pack this year, as it is not exactly packing much in the area of flash, but certainly doing an above average job in the gameplay department.

### uprising

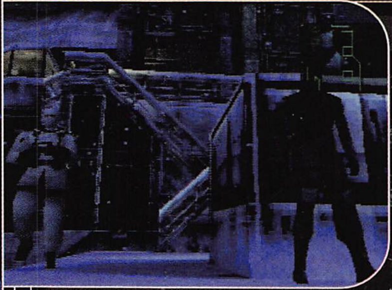


Uprising is also making the jump from PC to Playstation, and will also receive a heavy dose of arcade action to make it a bit more console friendly. This one was easily on of the most underrated games at show, with excellent visuals, intense gameplay, and loads of extras (including dual-shock compatibility...aww yeah!).

# The GameFan E3 Top 10

## metal gear solid

developer: konami ...... publisher: konami ... avail: October



Many people at E3 considered Metal Gear Solid the "Game of the Show" two years in a row. Since it was only a videotape last year, that conclusion may be a bit hasty; but this year MGS was playable and stood a cut above the rest.

From the opening moments of the playable demo, you know you're in for something special. For starters, credits appear onscreen while you're playing, like the beginning of a movie. The game begins with Snake infiltrating the enemy compound via an underwater entrance. The camera angle is first person while you're swimming, which makes for a great effect.

You start with only a pack of cigarettes and binoculars. Cigarettes? That's right. What kind of ultra cool hero doesn't always have a smoke handy? But get this, whenever Snake lights up a cigarette, he loses life! It's this kind of attention to detail which makes MGS a standout title. You must use any and everything available to sneak into the base. Grab guards and use them as a human shield, crawl through air vents, etc.

Plot, excitement, a ton of options, incredible realism... Konami's got a very solid title coming in October.

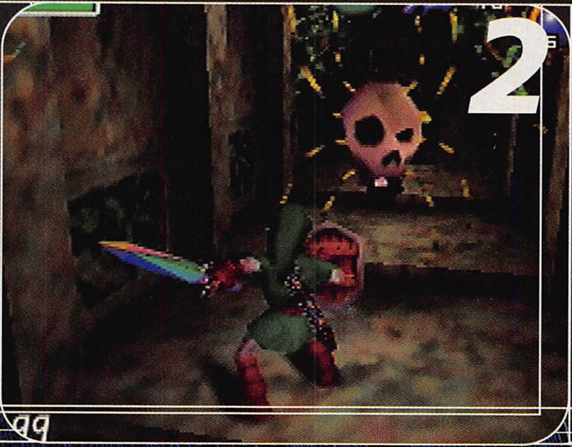



## zelda 64

developer:nintendo ...... publisher: nintendo ... avail: november

Within that drought era where lifeless games are forced upon you like bad medicine, a rare gem of a game comes along that changes you into a hardcore fan. Such games are rare nowadays, but perhaps it's best that way so we may treasure those bright sparkles of brilliance that come every few years. It's lucky that geniuses like Shigeru Miyamoto (though ECM will contend) are here to bless us with the next incarnation of Zelda. While Zelda: TOOT (for short) still had some choppiness to its animation, Miyamoto assured everyone that he knew this, and all the minor flaws would be corrected when Zelda finally launches. Other minor flaws? Playing the game for a good number of minutes, I couldn't help but wonder at the ease of control, yet enjoy the challenge of mastering the combat, and at the same time, get lost in a world filled with deep canyons, expansive fields of green, dark dungeons, steamy red caverns of lava... oh, the list goes on. I have patience though, knowing that Zelda will be a grand adventure, one that will not only satisfy me till the next chapter in the travels of Link, but also leave me with memorable moments that the hardcore fan of this series keeps as a cherished memory.



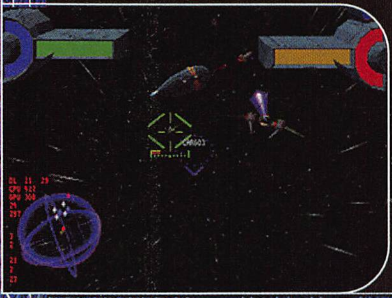


# colony wars: vengeance

developer: psygnosis ......publisher: psygnosis avail: 4th quarter

No one would deny that *Colony Wars* was a beautiful looking game with an impressive engine. Unfortunately, the game itself was suspect. Gamers had complaints about the control, the repetitive nature of the missions, and some of the collision detection.





No one can ever accuse Psygnosis of not listening to their public, because every issue that gamers had about the first *Colony wars*, has been addressed in the sequel, *Colony Wars: Vengeance*. Not only is this game visually stunning, overflowing with vibrant color and knock-out lighting effects, but the gameplay is rock solid.

For starters, the missions are of a much wider variety. Now you can battle on land as well as in sp ace. The boss characters are big and menacing (wait until you see the spider mech!), the ships are very well designed, and the weapons light up the sky with the kind of pyrotechnics you'd expect. The physics model has been tweaked and the collision detection problem resolved.

Essentially, *Colony Wars: Vengeance* is the bomb. This game will revolutionize the 3D space shooter and assuredly spawn a dozen knock-offs. For this reason, it earns the right to be the 3rd best game we saw at E3.




# silent hill

developer: konami ......publisher: konami avail: 4th quarter

*Silent Hill* is probably the sleeper game of this year's E3. Overshadowed by the daunting presence of *Metal Gear Solid*, this game received no press prior to the event, despite the fact that it's scheduled to be out before *Metal Gear*.

So what's got the *GF* staff in an uproar? Let's start with the most impressive: the CG visuals. Accompanied by moody acoustic guitar riffs, the CG scenes depict the most life-like people you'll ever see in a video game (up till now, anyways). The characters' expressions, especially that nurse when she pleads with you, convey more emotion than my pen (err... keyboard) can ever do.





The story (yes, there's story here as well) is straight out of the Twilight Zone. You find yourself recovering from a car crash near the town of Silent Hill. Mysteriously, the town is deserted and even worse... your daughter is missing. Wandering the town in search of life, the adventure begins. The atmosphere of Silent Hill is exactly what the title sounds like: gloomy, chilling, and dark... the stuff that thrillers are made of.

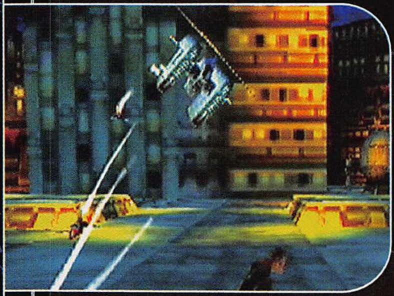
You'll come across blood and enemies just as you would if it weren't a game. Call it *Resident Evil* with a much darker, gothic feel. The emphasis isn't on killing zombies here, but scaring you out of your mind with the overall atmosphere and bizarre images.

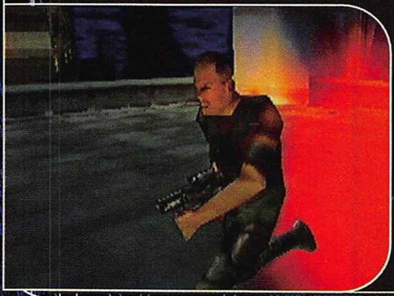


# apocalypse

developer: neversoft ·······publisher: activision avail: 4th quarter

Bruce is back, and he is bad, baby! As some of you may recall, Activision had some serious hype behind their latest experiment with this action hero, but after the show, Bruce looked more like a girl selling cookies door-to-door than he did The Last Boy Scout. Lucky for him, Neversoft has picked up the title that seemed to take a dive of the cliff of gaming embarrassment, and it was easily the shocker of the 98 E3 Expo.





Taking a cue from ASC's ONE, Neversoft has taken out the whole virtua-sidekick gig, and is letting Bruce go it alone, and thankfully, the change, among a host of others, has done a world of good for the title. The analog support with full dual shock fits the game like a glove at this point and the visuals have also been cleaned up a great deal. Since he has changed roles in the title, Bruce will be returning to the studio for some additional voiceover action, so we should see a good deal of improvement on the audio end as well.

A good 90% of the games I saw at E3 didn't quite meet my expectations when I finally got to take them for a test spin, but I have to send a big shot out to Neversoft for this title, as they have saved this title from gaming doom. If action is your thing, get ready for the end of gaming as you've known it, cause it is coming!



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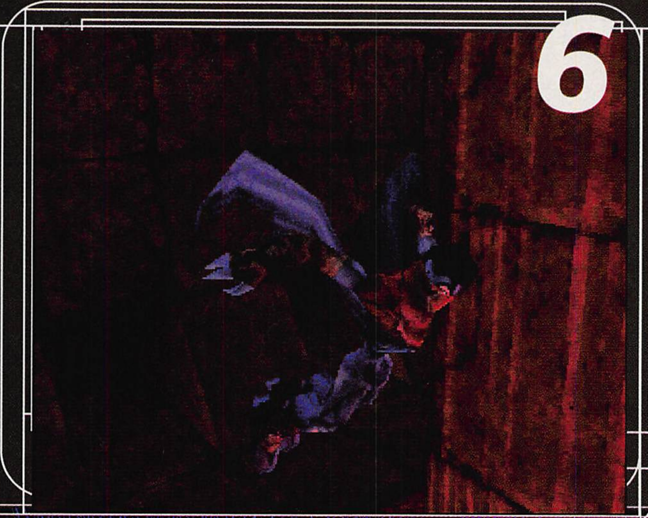
# soul reaver

developer: crystal dynamics ·······publisher: tba avail: october

Imagine falling down hundreds of feet underground, then splashing into a pool of pungent, liquid acidic to you body. Gasping for air and from the pain, you flesh sizzles and you mind has only one goal in mind... survival. You summon your last bit of strength as you reach for dry land, and pull your pained body out. You're alive and though your whole body is on fire, a voice commands your mind with a new goal... revenge. This is the story behind Soul Reaver: Legacy of Kain's main character Raziel, who, cast down to a watery death by Lord Kain, finds revenge his only way to pay Lord Kain for the gift of punishment. The dark world that Raziel inhabits is filled with misty caverns of grand architecture, with pillars that spiral up for many meters. While the game is still early in its development, Soul Reaver showed us a potential Zelda killer in the works. Slated for release in October '98, its interesting gameplay elements in a 3D world, combined with its breathtaking visuals made it an easy choice in our Top Ten. Though getting a spot at number six, this game has incredible potential to become game of the year. As it was at the show, it was still too early to tell since only one type of enemy was encountered. Still, the fighting elements, as well as capturing the soul technique, was implemented. This game will be a definite contender in the coming months of 1998.







6

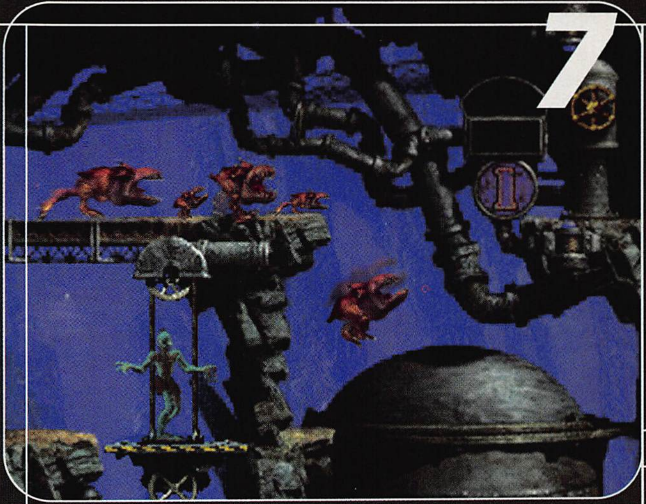
# abe's exoddus

developer: oddworld inhabitants······publisher: gt interactive avail: 3rd qtr

Welcome back to Abe's world. Abe's Exoddus got the royal behind-closed-doors treatment at this year's E3, but of course, GF was there to make sure this one got the recognition it deserved (the rest of the public was treated to only a movie of it). This might have made it higher in the rankings but we didn't get as much time with it as we would have liked, so here it resides comfortably at #7. This time out, Abe is on a quest to stop the evil Glukkons from turning the bones of deceased Mudokons into the official beverage of Oddworld Inhabitants' Abe's Exoddus: Soul Storm Brew. Now if I'm you I'd be a bit ticked about the whole thing. Anyway, Abe has all new Gamespeak, new possessions (that's Exorcist-style), and a whole bag full of new tricks. You'll laugh till there are tears in your eyes, as this was easily the funniest game at the show and one of the most fun. This title also represents one of the few 2D games at the show, a genre which is in danger of true extinction. For that reason alone it gets the GameFan seal of approval (well, at least ECM's). Not to get too in-depth here, go back to the front of the issue and check out the first full-blown cover story on this hot, hot game due out later this year.






# heart of darkness

developer: amazing studios ······publisher: interplay avail: 3rd qtr '98

Three years in the making, Interplay's Heart of Darkness will finally see light on the PlayStation this fall. This is one of the last 2D platformers out there; and there are a few of us at GameFan who don't want this genre to die... at least not quietly. 2D, cute, cartoony, jumping, skills-based platforming enjoyment await any who give this title a fair shake.

Unlike other games where only YOU can save the world from the threat of impending doom, HoD has a much simpler, basic plot. You're Andy, a young boy, whose dog Whiskey disappears at the beginning of the game. The rest of your adventure consists of you trying to find your dog. Along the way, Andy must confront his worst fear: the Dark (what else would scare a little, young boy?). Enemies will be shadowy, elusive, and the product of his imagination.

A nice touch rarely seen in games any more is the use of animated cutscenes spliced between levels to advance the story; these cutscenes are placed so cleverly that the game and animation blend perfectly... to the point that you can't distinguish the two. Gameplay-wise, Andy has all the usual platform character moves: climbing, swinging, shooting, jumping, and swimming. And puzzle-solving skills are a must if you want to get far in this game. Why won't producers make more games like this? The search for Whiskey (why does that not sound right?) begins fourth quarter of this year.



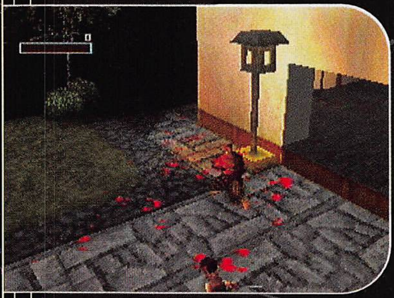




# tenchu

developer: sony music ......publisher: activision avail: september

Activision looks to have lucked out on the acquisition of one of this year's hottest import titles, the killer kung-fu 3-D action title, Tenchu. Developed by none other than Sony Music, the same crew responsible for Parappa the Rapper, one would have expected Sony to snag this one with the quickness, but apparently, they had other plans, and Activision was all over this one like the humid Atlanta air on an E3 attendee.





In case you missed our coverage of the import in earlier issues, Tenchu is sort of an undercover version of Eidos' Tomb Raider with some serious skills in the area of gameplay and atmosphere, and does a great job of capturing the feel of being a sneaky, cut-throat ninja on a mission. You play the part of a male or female character who uses his or her abilities as a master of stealth and the martial arts to bring the pain to the bad guys, hopping from rooftop to rooftop or sneaking through the alleys of a village, bringing silent death to the opposition in 32 bit style.

The gang at Activision are making some well-choosen revisions to an already impressive title, tweaking the camera angles (one of gamers' few complaints when playing the title), improving enemy AI, adding new levels, and much more. If all goes well with the localization of this title, it could be a serious contender for game of the year honors upon release.




# poy poy 2

developer: konami ......publisher: konami avail: 3rd qtr '98

Many of you might be wondering how this obscure title has managed to sneak its way onto our Top Ten List. The answer is an easy one: This game rocks!

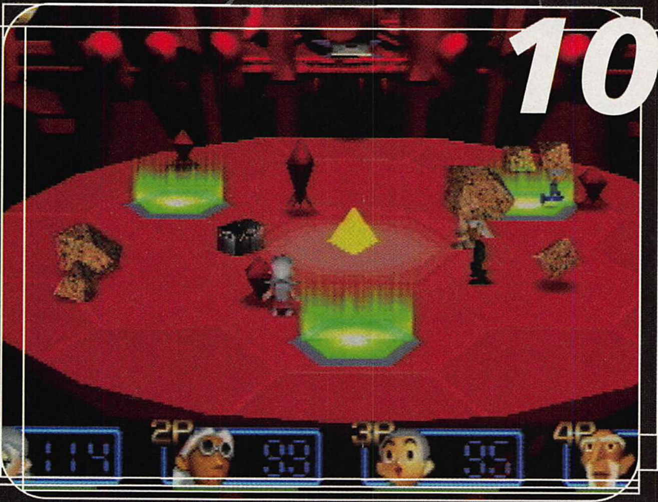
We think Konami made a big mistake last year by not pushing this game more. *Poy Poy* was one of the surprise titles to come through GameFan's doors, back then, and we played the hell out of it. It had the best gameplay of any multi-player party game, we had seen, in quite some time. Once we had unlocked all of the secret characters and maxed-out all of the power gloves, it was chaos. Eight months later and we still talk about that game.





We talked about it, that is, up until the show when we got a chance to play the sequel. *Poy Poy 2* is everything the original was... and more. In fact, it may deserve to be higher on this list.

Run around and throw stuff at people until you are the last man (or woman) standing; that's all this game is about; it's just that simple. But it is this game's simplicity that makes it genius. You can choose between 16 characters, each with his or her own traits, and battle on ten different levels. *Poy Poy 2* has 23 power gloves and the arenas are now multi-leveled, adding an extra bit of strategy and flair. If you liked the original, you'll love the sequel.



# the editor's PICKS

TOP 10 TOP 10 TOP 10

Unlike the rest of the editors, my gameplay time was decidedly more limited. Sure, I got to play all the big, hot titles that they didn't get a crack at (heh), but I also didn't get to play a lot of the smaller, more hidden games (some of them were playing in remote corners on a single monitor). Unfortunately, although I did get to see things like Project X, Dreamcast, and Perfect Dark, I thought the show was a little lackluster overall. It felt a great deal like last year's E3, in that it was more of a holding pattern than anything else. Sure, you'll have the other eds gushing over games like Metal Gear Solid, Spyro, and Silent Hill, but for the most part, I was in full-blown cynic mode. Too many racing, corridor, and 3D platformers littered the show floor. Sometimes I wish games like Mario 64, Doom, and the entire racing genre had never seen the light of day now that I'll be forced to wade through a swath of them for the next 6 months and beyond. Such is the tortuous life of a video game magazine editor, I suppose.




On the bright side, though (yeah, sometimes something good happens), I was able to see the Sega Dreamcast in motion and felt the need to acquire a fresh pair of linens afterwards. Anybody that even doubted for a second (shame on you) that Sega didn't "know what it was doing" can now fully repent and beg them for forgiveness. Even all the PS-zombies out there will be right there in line with all those lonely Saturn owners come launch day next year—if you can wait that long (personally, I think you'll be hard-pressed to just sit tight on this one). Can't go much into detail except to say that, well, Welcome to the Next Level, Sega's back!

Beyond Dreamcast, Tempest 3000 on Project X was rockin' hard (hold off on those DVD players till they incorporate PX tech, people). Perfect Dark, the next in Rare's gallery of N64 system-stoppers was hot—think GoldenEye, only better. Plus, for all you Lara loonies you take the role of a fine female in PD as well. The rare 2D gem was found in the remarkable Heart of Darkness which has, after years of delays, finally set for a release towards the end of this year.

Speaking of 2D, where the hell were all of the 2D games?! Outside of Capcom and their usual legion of (PS only) 2D fighters and Capcom Generations collections, there was nary a 2D, parallax-intensive game anywhere in the building. Sure, there was Silhouette Mirage at the WD booth, but I don't wait over a year for a port of platformers anymore. It was a sad revelation, and I can only hope (and pray!) that Sega has something in order for Dreamcast of a 2D nature (of course, that's probably as likely as the system not blowing your socks off). Oh well, maybe next year (yeah, right).

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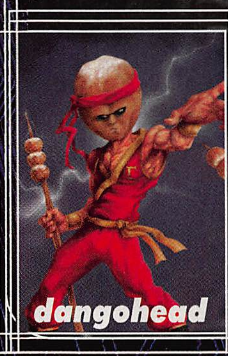
## ecm's top 10

top 10 top 10 top 10 top 10 top 10 top 10 top 10 top 10 top 10 top 10

1. devil dice
2. slip groove
3. heart of darkness
4. wild 9
5. abe's exoddus
6. apocalypse
7. tempest 3000
8. perfect dark
9. capcom generations: GnG
10. capcom generations: 19xx

The Electronic Entertainment Expo, otherwise known as E3, started and ended for this dango, quickly without any real large booms and bangs of excitement. Though only my second tour of duty into this jungle filled with cybersnares, digital booby traps, and unfriendly-firing PR rep's, I guess the whole adventure element was missing as I was rather unexcited by most of the show. Perhaps the biggest letdown was Virtual On Oratorio Tangram (also know cutely as VOOT) not being at the show. Without offending anyone specific, Sega was the biggest disappointment of the show, even if it unveiled the Dreamcast system to certain select members of the press.

Nintendo featured a full sized cafe the size of a restaurant, and included gift section full of dolls and toys. Pokemon, also known as Pikachu, made its scene near the gift counter, where a kid-sized Pokemon would launch hundreds of smaller Pokemons to the on-lookers. As that crowd grew too large for the area where the Pokemon stood, the crowd became a mob and as you might surmise, folks were actually fist-fighting over Pokemon dolls. Nintendo wised up, and the large Pokemon disappeared for the remaining days of the show. F-Zero X and Zelda: TOOT were both playable, and both were always lined up with people eagerly waiting their turn to play. Zelda was great but looked a bit choppy, but Shigeru Miyamoto, who I had the great pleasure of meeting, said that the game was incomplete and all would be fixed when the game launches in Japan.




Sony's booth was a gigantic two-story mold of metal, complete with second story cafe and walkway. While the number of monitors Nintendo and Sony displayed were pretty equal, Sony had a better variety of newer games, especially from third party support. Crash 3 looked and played slightly better than Crash 2, though Bust A Groove (better known as the import Bust A Move: Rhythm and Dance) drew a large following as players were bobbing their heads to the beat. Spyro the Dragon was a pleasant surprise, and this dango spent many minutes playing this magical game.

However, 3rd parties gave proof that they truly know how to make the games that everyone wants. I'm sure most of you are shocked with my #2 pick of Colony Wars: Vengeance, but Psygnosis really did a number on this title. By listening to all the faithful fans of this game, they basically took all the mistakes from the first Colony wars, and corrected them, even adding land missions.

But with little doubt, Metal Gear Solid was the game of the show. Konami's display area was transformed into a fort complete with muscle-headed soldiers patrolling the grounds. Metal Gear Solid played exactly the way I imagined, and while the camera viewing may annoy some, you can't help but get into the drama of this game. Metal Gear Solid is full of little details that add up, making it more like an adventure you're taking part in rather than a game.

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## dango's top 10

top 10 top 10 top 10 top 10 top 10 top 10 top 10 top 10 top 10 top 10

1. metal gear solid
2. colony wars: vengeance
3. zelda 64
4. spyro the dragon
5. tenchu
6. f-zero X
7. apocalypse
8. a bug's life
9. poy poy 2
10. xenogears

From the opening moments of the captain's "We don't have enough fuel to last that long..." comment to the close of the show, the E3 trip was a blast. I was graced with the chance to see the future of console games, and the most impressive company out there was Konami.

Three of my top 10 games are Konami-spawned, and their booth itself was something special. As soon as you go near it, you notice the buff, male guards toting oversized guns standing at watch. A canned voice alerts you that "You are entering a Konami militarized zone." Within the compound proper (leaving the real world behind), camo-decked Konami babes walk around offering helpful hints and providing "atmosphere" for weary gamers, most of which are drooling over that one game uh... what was it called? Oh yeah, *Silent Hill*! Square and Namco had better watch out, because the cinema scenes in *SH* simply broke Commandments. "Thy CG shalt not be this good." The atmosphere provided by the acoustic guitar riffs blended with bizarre images of pain and horror are disturbing enough to wake up Clive Barker in the middle of the night in a cold sweat. *Resident Evil*? You haven't even SEEN evil, not for another few months anyways.




I remember seeing the videotape of *MGS* from last year's E3 and being blown away by it. When I saw the new videotape this year, I couldn't believe it... but I was blown away again. The "chain gun guy," tank, and helicopter on display were enough to leave a strong second impression on my mind. And when I got to play it... the level of detail and the options you're given in completing a level just have to be seen to be believed.

Other booths at the show, while not their own militarized zones, were impressive as well. SquareSoft had regular "showings" (yes, as in charge for admission) of their games, namely *Parasite Eve*, which I heard many a person talking about in random conversation throughout the show. For those who are curious, the translation is excellent, even better than *Final Fantasy VII*.

*Zelda* was... well, Zelda. *Tenchu* was given a tremendous make-over, and the game was great to begin with. *Heart of Darkness* was the 2D sweetness that my platforming heart desired. *Kagero* (*Deception 2*) finally allowed my corridor-queasy self a chance to play *Deception* without inducing migraines. *Spyro* moved at an unbelievably smooth frame rate for a 3D platformer. *Colony Wars: Vengeance* was exactly that—*Colony Wars* back with a Vengeance. And *Poy Poy 2* looked better and more enjoyable than the original.

A brief blurb on PC games, I felt there were a lot of fun PC titles such as *Aliens vs Predator*, *Populous: The Beginning*, *Rayman 2*, *The Game of Life*, and *Outcast* to name a few.

Lastly, the parties (especially Eidostock) left their mark on all in attendance. The image of a drunken El Niño grabbing the mike at Karaoke will surely be remembered for a while.

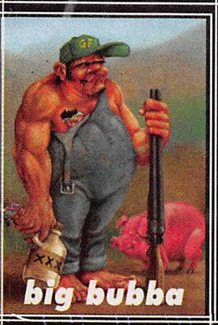
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## eggo's top 10

top 10 top 10 top 10 top 10 top 10 top 10 top 10 top 10

1. metal gear solid
2. parasite eve
3. zelda 64
4. silent hill
5. tenchu
6. heart of darkness
7. colony wars: vengeance
8. kagero castle of deception
9. spyro the dragon
10. poy poy 2

E3, for me, was a nice reminder of two things. First off, all that glitters is not gold. This year's Electronic Entertainment Expo was not only a chance for developers to show off the latest in 3-D accelerated gobbletygoop on a million PCs all across the show floor, but was also a chance for the console gang to show off titles that were finally beginning to max out the respective potentials of the various platforms represented at the show. Unfortunately, this did not equal a slew of new amazing titles, but rather, made it all the more obvious how unimaginative and (dare I say) desperate developers have become in the race to get our gaming dollars. There were a slew of titles that upon first glance had my eyes popping out of my head like a character in an anime flick, but after close inspection, few titles had me really hooked on the bait they were dangling, which usually included a scantily clad babe blowing baddies up or some sort of Quake/Tomb Raider clone. Granted, I love me some Tomb Raider, but if you ask me, this year's show served as a wakeup call to developers. As was the case with our crew, gamers everywhere will slowly recognize the fact that there is very little in the way of innovation under the gaming sun, and though it may sell a slew of titles before the majority of the button-mashing world knows what has hit them, it will be the titles who strive to set new standards that will really change gaming.




Secondly, this year was a reminder of how gaming is as much an individual taste as it is anything else. Yeah, we were treated to a playable Metal Gear Solid, which more than lives up to the oodles of oozing provided by the gaming media, and we finally got a chance to get our mitts on the stellar Zelda 64, but few at GameFan were ready to forget about the rest of the floor to stay and play the "big games." These titles, along with a host of additional marketing gems, and even the occasional lesser known sleeper, such as ASCII's Air Boardin' USA or Psygnosis' Kula World, managed to give many at the show a good kick in their cynical, jaded heads. Forget the parties. Forget the hype. If you could manage to swim through the sea of hype, you might have been shocked at the number of good titles on the floor, as it seems while there were not really too many show-stopping titles, developers have managed to put together a slew of very solid titles. I guess E3, more than anything, was evidence that while there is still a lot of gaming garbage on the horizon, gaming on the whole is certainly headed in the right direction. As the line between consoles and PCs becomes more and more nondescript (Sega's Dreamcast leading the way), we'll start to see a slew of revolutionary titles, and if this year's show was any indication, it won't be about finding the game that is right for the masses, but the ones that are right for you.

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## bubba's top 10

top 10 top 10 top 10 top 10 top 10 top 10 top 10 top 10

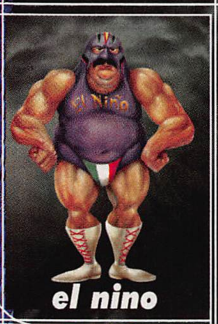
1. metal gear solid
2. zelda 64
3. air boardin' usa
4. legacy of kain 2
5. colony wars: vengeance
6. rayman 2
7. motorhead
8. silent hill
9. kula world
10. the fifth element

Well, E3 is over and I am mucho tired. Atlanta was hot and humid and it made me sweat, quite a bit. I hate to dispel any images you folks may have had about how awesome the show was, but the sad truth is this year's crop of games was far from earth shattering. E3 '98 was, in fact, the least impressive of the four.

There were some bright spots, though. Of course Metal Gear Solid lived up to the hype; man, that game looked incredible. I know some of you will freak out, but I have to say MGS was much cooler than Zelda.

Another surprise was Psygnosis' Kula World. This game is a super-addictive puzzle solving title, where you guide a beach ball around, Marble Madness-style. This game kept me playing for a half hour—and that's a long time for a show! Also at the Pysgnosis booth was Colony Wars: Vengeance, shaping up to be one of the best of the year.

I'm sure Eggo already told you, but the Hasbro booth was another big surprise. Many of my favorite board games (Axis and Allies!!!) are now on the PC and console. Also, they had this cute game called Glover, that has you controlling this hand that looks like the Hamburger Helper guy.



el nino

How about those corridor games. While Unreal was impressive and did a good job of fulfilling our expectations, Sin and Half Life really spun my wheels. I can't wait to see these puppies come to the console (fingers crossed).

In the sports department, EA stole the show. Madden 99, NCAA Football 99 and NHL 99 rocked! I dare say Madden may regain the title of "Best Football Sim". Also, EA Sports made a huge splash having Oscar De La Hoya and Sugar Ray Leonard show up for a mock fight, at the EA booth. It was amazing to see them there, in person.

There were a couple of start-up sports groups from ESPN and FOX. Both had games that ran the gamut from lousy to good, but considering the resources available to both companies, this will be temporary, I'm sure. ESPN had the Hansons, from Slapshot fame, there to sign autographs. Man, I love those guys, but they look so washed-up...

Acclaim won the N64 baseball crown, with All-Star Baseball, while VR Sports took home the 32-bit crown with the stellar VR Baseball '99.

I'd like to take a second to say there was one person noticeably missing from this year's show, and it's unfortunate: Dave Dempsey. One of the best sports PR and marketing guys in the biz, Dave is an asset to anyone lucky enough to have him working for them. To let him slip away is a mistake...

That's about all I have to say. I was too disappointed with the Sony, Sega and Nintendo booths to even comment on them. It was definitely the Year of the Third Party. Siesta time.

## el nino's top 10

1. metal gear solid
2. nhl 99
3. madden 99
4. zelda 64
5. vigilante 8
6. silent hill
7. poy poy 2
8. kula world
9. colony wars: vengeance
10. tiny tank up your arsenal

The Year of the Third Party? How 'bout the Year of the Racing Game? Man, I've never seen so many racing games! It was great!

Let's begin with my favorite: Rally Cross 2. I'm looking forward to this one more than anything. I'm still the only guy I know of who beat the first in suicide mode and got the camo truck ('cept, of course, Kolbe at Sony, who did the AI). Believe me, guys, RC2 is gonna rock, even if you didn't like the first one! CoolBoarders 3, though it took me a second to get into, is also gonna rock, but be warned: It's a lot different than the first two. We'll see whether it lives up to the mark set by UEP Systems.



reubus

Airboarders had to be the Sleeper of the Show. It's just a blast, zipping up the side of a building, doing a handstand at the top, and zipping back down the side into the street.

THQ's Penny Racers (N64) will be the first Choro Q game to see the light of day in the States, and , being a big fan of the series ('cept for the Rainbow Wings thing), I can't wait for this one. Lighter racing, but fun.

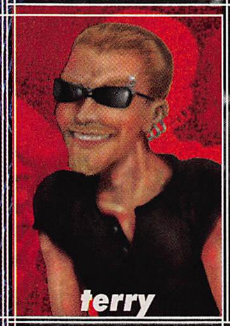
Kula World had me surprised. I'm not one for puzzle games, but this one had me playing it for quite a while. It's excellent.

And finally, T'ai Fu. This action/adventure/fighting game looks tight, fluid, and fun as hell. Great design and huge levels should put this one over the top on its release.

## reubus' top 5

1. rally cross 2
2. coolboarders 3
3. airboarders
4. t'ai fu
5. kula world

First off, let me just say it was very difficult to narrow my selection down to just my top five favorite games. It's not because there weren't that many good games, but rather that there were so many good games. The technology seems to have really caught up with just about everybody. There were still the cookie-cutter type games to be sure, like 'let's put the latest action-movie character into another run-around ho-hum shooter', but not like it has been in the recent past. I think developers are finally realizing that a great license does not a great game make. And there are still the Shinys and the Dreamworks (just to name a few) out there that are thankfully pushing the envelope even further. The technology being put into Dreamworks "Trespasser" for the PC is truly breathtaking, complete with an immense interactive world. Now will it equate into a fun playable game is the question. More importantly, will this technology translate to the console? T'ai-Fu, another Dreamworks title, also follows suit with immersive environs, albeit on a smaller scale. This game blew me away. The bad-ass characters in this 3D action/fighting game (due out on PlayStation this Sept.) really exist in their own world. Baddies can be picked up and thrown into fire pits, and they can do the same to you. Shiny's Wild 9 also offers a host of ways to interact with/torture your enemies.



terry

So, overall, a really amazing turnout of games this year, especially in a setting like E3 where every bell, whistle, and crowbar is thrown at you all at once to get your attention; it's really tough to stand out.

## t's top 5

1. t'ai fu
2. silent hill
3. wild 9
4. abe's exxodus
5. spyro the dragon

# THE WRAP-UP

Eerily quiet all throughout the show was the Sega booth. Tumbleweeds were seen rolling past playable versions of Burning Rangers, Panzer Saga, and Shining Force 3, with nary a soul to be found... And all Segaheads were left with were Dreamy visions of what lay behind closed doors. Cast your ballot now, because the console war is going to get hotter next year.

When the plane finally landed in Los Angeles, without a hitch, the masses of GameFan employees scrambled out in a hurry to kiss the ground and praise the heavens for the "dry heat" of California. Washed away in a second were the sweltering, rainy memories of Atlanta. All that remained were a newly-changed Dangohead ("only three beers!"), a pile of sweaty GameFan shirts, and a mountain of press information collected from the three day event.

Divvying up the piles of looted press kits and screenshot discs, the crew devoured it all in an information feeding frenzy, the likes of which will never be seen again (at least till next year). The end result of our journey? You've just read it. We hope you've enjoyed this peek at what the rest of the year promises... Until the next E3, which will be in our backyard (as a cry of "Hallelujah!!" rings out from the assembled throng of GF staffers). That, and the hope that Dangohead comes back to us as the one, true pastry we've always known him to be...



*In Loving Memoriam: Little Billy*

# Developer's Dungeon

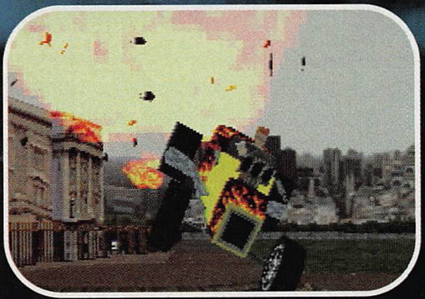
**"The future wave of consoles is coming within the next few years..."**

## RAMBLINGS OF SOME GUY IN THE INDUSTRY

*"Man does that game look great or what?"*

—Kolbe Launchbaugh
Assistant Producer,
989 Studios

How many times have I heard that in the last two years? Comments like this, along with things like the best graphics ever, revolutionary anti-aliasing, real-time environment mapping, and so on. To tell you the truth, I'm getting sick of it really quickly. Sure, nice graphics are great, but how far does that get you in overall enjoyment of a game? It's as if the only thing that matters is your game must look great, and playability need only be passable. I'd much rather play a game that looks like complete pap that is tons of fun than look at a really neat-o game that I can't play.



Currently I am working on three very solid games (*Cool Boarders 3*, *Rally Cross 2*, and *Twisted Metal 3*). They are all coming along very nicely, and they all have something VERY important in games: GAMEPLAY! Not to say that these games look bad, but we put gameplay way before graphics. We want our games to play the very best; we listen to consumer feedback and try to put everything that we possibly can into our games, we want you (the end user) to ultimately be very happy with your purchase. There are other developers in the industry that are doing similar things, but most of them are concerned with the way their product looks and what license they can get behind it. Although seeing as how all three of my current titles are sequels I guess I should tread carefully. In all honesty, though, in all of these games, we have many new features and gameplay elements to offer the user, and more of the same tried and true gameplay that made them hits in the first place.




On the other hand, some of the games that we are starting to see on the PC development side are absolutely stunning. Many of these games have great graphics and gameplay to boot! The future wave of consoles is coming within the next few years, and if we can get graphics on par, or beyond what current PCs have to offer, we are in for a treat! Think about it, programmers will no longer have to spend months developing some software z-buffer or some other fancy tool for the PlayStation. They will be able to spend those months coming up with a better physics model, or spending more time making the multi-player aspect of a game top notch. These are the kinds of things we can look forward to in the next generation! These things along with the possibility of many other advancements will take gaming to a new level.

Now let's move on to the lighter side of an industry job. This job has some long hours and some very stressful times, but in the end it is extremely fun and rewarding. I love to finish a game after a year+ of hard work and more hours than I can remember sitting in front of my computer, and see a magazine review, or read some positive Usenet comments of my game. It's the ultimate high! The only way to love your job is to love something, then have someone pay you for doing it, and that is what this industry is all about! Many of the people in my family don't seem to understand the long hours on salary, and the crazy things you do (like work three days straight at the end of a project), but it is all worth it—heck I'd do it for free (It's nice to get paid though).

The above was the somewhat crazed ramblings of a lowly assistant producer, one who loves his job, and would not give up any aspect of it, for anything. Games are their own world, that is why we play them, to be a part and have fun in that world. Now I'm off to make those worlds fun for you all to romp in! But first, I will leave you with a top ten list of some sort. Hmm! What kind of list shall I do!? How about:

***Top ten reasons for getting into the Video Game Industry:***

10. Taco Bell won't hire you.
9. You have a Turbo Express.
8. You beat the Barney game.
7. You have no idea what Quake is but would really like to know.
6. Your fingers can hit the buttons really fast.
5. You have too much free time after finishing a long day at McDonald's.
4. You want to get rid of your girlfriend/wife.
3. You want to cut off all contact with your family.
2. Cuz gamez rule!
1. You don't know any better.

# OTHER STUFF



## DREAMCAST?!? SAY IT AIN'T SO!

The name for Sega's new 128-bit console, formerly Katana, has been changed to Dreamcast, which will be the final name.



Almost any of the previous names: Katana, Dural, or Black Belt Dragon were better than Dreamcast. Still, it's finalized so Sega-heads will have to live with it. Just take a look at the pics of Sega's 3 million+ polygon masher. And remember it's also packing a 33.6 modem for online gaming.

To top it all off, the control pads utilize a new type of 'memory card'—one with a built-in D-pad,





buttons, and LCD. It's more like a PDA (Personal Digital Assistant) than a memory card. Hell, it's more like a Digimon than a bleedin' memory card—you can link two of them together and share info and fight each other to the death (OK, I made that up).

In other Kat... err, Dreamcast news, sources inside Sega are worried that the system won't make the Nov. 20, 1998 Japanese release date.

As for a US release, there are persistent rumors that Dreamcast's US debut will come in *before* the targeted Fall '99 release date. March and May have been touted as potential windows, but everything is dependent on software, or rather the amount of software available at launch. Sega is not keen to repeat the mistakes of past system launches and the traditional lack of software that plagues them. Instead, it appears that Sega is looking to have software ready in waves, starting with 10-12 games and then every 3 months release a clutch of titles.

## PROJECT X

The future for Project X, a new console designed by the makers of the Jaguar and set for a December release date, does not look good. There's talk of delays and questionable software development which cloud the winter holiday future for this project. Add in the lack of a dedicated 3D pipeline (no onboard 3D-specific hardware) and it may be a tough sell, especially with word of Dreamcast having come over the horizon. Still, it's supposed to be able to work with home entertainment boxes such as DVD players. The idea is interesting in that the console won't be limited to the initial hardware, since it's compatible with other equipment. If it flies or not, we'll have to see...

## FINALLY FANTASY VIII

Let the hype begin. The import version of *Brave Fencer Musashiden*, Square's PS answer to Zelda, will come with a playable demo of *Final Fantasy VIII*. The characters in *FF8* look more Westernized, like those in *Parasite Eve*, as opposed to the traditional super-deformed characters of Square RPGs. The story is also supposed to be more intricate than that of *FFVII*, and the logo for the game almost looks like a love story. Projected release dates are end of '98 Japanese and next year U.S.

## STARCRAFT 64

In an effort to draw older gamers, Nintendo signed a deal with Blizzard for the exclusive console rights to *StarCraft*, the PC real-time strategy hit (reviewed last issue). Blizzard is known for producing the PC blockbusters *WarCraft II*, *Diablo*, and now *StarCraft*. Nintendo spokespeople have said that, "There will be a multi-player mode for the Nintendo version..." but we're only left to speculate on exactly how it will be done. Split-screen seems doubtful for a strategy game (especially four player); so rumors are flying of "linking up consoles" and cartridge modems. In fact, there is one game for the Japanese N64 that has a built-in modem, albeit it's a mahjongg game (another thing about Japanese culture I'll never understand... along with pachinko...).

## HEY NINTENDO, LOOK WHO'S CAPCOMING OVER

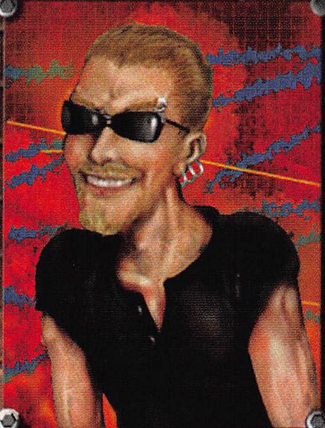
More good news for Nintendo fans, Capcom has signed a deal to produce games for the N64. Wonder what Nintendo had to <ahem> pony up for that. Sources indicate one of the first titles will be *MegaMan Neo*. Imagine *MegaMan* getting the classic Nintendo 3D treatment. Hey! I have an idea! How 'bout a real fighting game... (Ed's note: That's crazy talk!).

## PLAYSTATION2 PUSHED UP?!

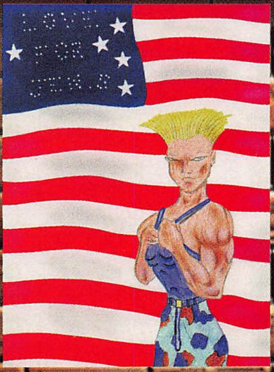
Now that Dreamcast is official (oh, the pain... was Katana really that bad?), rumors are flying out of Sonyville that the PS2 may get a kick in the pants and be pushed out of the gates earlier than expected. Seems Sony took one look at the specs on DC and broke into a cold sweat. It would appear that the rumors of backward compatibility are true, and that is hampering the raw power that the newer PS is capable of generating at a reasonable price point (around US $250). Let's just say that it will be an interesting game of chess around next E3.

Be sure to catch the comedic stylings of Wolfie, now appearing nightly at The Waffle House in Buckhead , GA.

# WOLFINGER'S WALL



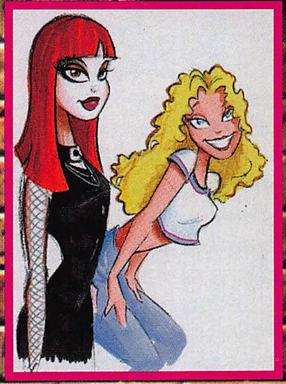
And remember, I wanna see lotsa drawings of squirrel-monkeys an' lemurs. But make 'em mean, angry-mean!



"Love For Jen" reads the caption in the stars, referring to the Guile-loving artist-extrordinare,Jen Seng. **Freddy Velazquez** of Orlando, FL, you do her proud!



**Fawaz Sami Kurdi** of Saudi Arabia, sends us this cool anime-style comic panel. Kid, you're going places!



"Here's my favorite nubbins" says li'l **Vriben Dermon** of Dentene, CA. Vriben likes to take his markers to the mall when he draws."It makes for good inspiration" Sounds like a plan to me..







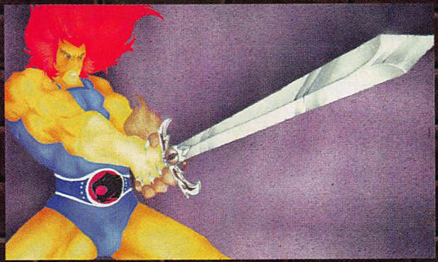

A couple of fighting babes comes to us from **Alexis "Shermie" Rivera** of Riverdale, GA. Hey, whose head is Felicia holding? *Gasp* Jen will not be pleased.



**Jenny Sun** of Annapolis, MD has sent in this terrific rendered pencil sketch from the popular Castlevania game. Nice job!




Here's a couple of Jon Talbains from **Bob Moussavi**, a.k.a. "Killer-Kabob". Great use of the digital medium. Check out more of Bob's stuff at: www.geocities.com/SoHo/Gallery/8066/colorpics.htm



Oh yeeah! It's all about Thunder Cats' Lyono! This fine air-brushing comes to us from **Wessly Diaz** of Orlando, Fl. So is he in a game?

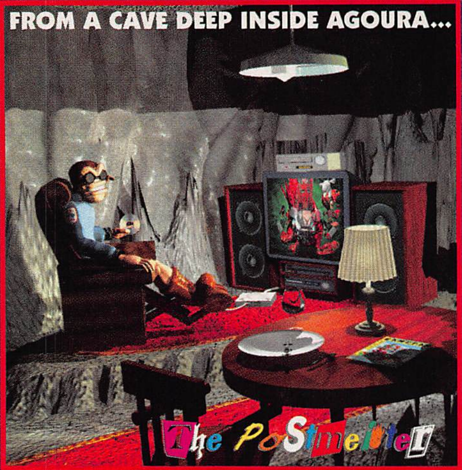
8th grader, **Joe Howell** of Belmont, MI drew us these fun li'l FF Tactics characters. Thanks, dude.






**Jocelyn Kiersted** from Hurley, NY drew us these way cool Ramna Charters. Put those colored pencils to work.

**See Ya Next Month!**




**ANOTHER BLANKET PARTY...**

Dear Posty Dude,

As a *FFVII* stalwart, I was puzzled by the game's loose end. Now I don't blame Square for that, since they did have their share of time and space constraints, but having read Cadet Finn's letter in Volume 6, Issue 2, I figured I'd submit, for your approval, my own version as follows:

After we see the image of Aeris' lovely face, surrounded in the Lifestream, bathed in green, the Highwind's bridge is engulfed in a combination of white light and the Lifestream—before fading to reveal... to everyone's surprise, Aeris standing on the bridge deck back from the dead. Everyone rushes to her, welcoming her back, some cheering and some crying with joy.

TIFA: "Oh Aeris... >sob< >sob< we thought we had lost you!"

AERIS: I'm NEVER going to lose you sweeties! I love you ALL!! [To Yuffie] You can stop crying now, I'm back!

YUFFIE [crying]: I'm so happy, I could cry!

From there, Aeris goes on to explain how she cheated death. After Sephiroth took a stab at her, she became one with the planet's Lifestream, which the combination of her prayer and the White Materia helped her reach. During that time, Aeris met her real mother, Iflana, who praised her for her effort, but pointed out to her that it wasn't her time to die until 87 years later. On the plus side, Aeris had something in addition to the White Materia... the rarest Materia that neither Cloud, nor the Shinra, nor Hojo, nor Corneo, nor Rapps, nor Jenova, nor Sephiroth knew of: Resurrection Materia. Combined with holy and the Lifestream, it brought the dead person back to life. But it can only be used once per person. Anyhow, only until Jenova and Sephiroth were defeated was she able to come back to Cloud and company. In the end, she finishes her tale by saying she was sorry she couldn't tell them that before, lest any of Sephiroth's minions and the Shinra's spies hear of it. Everyone forgives and welcomes her home, then they head off to Cosmo Canyon to celebrate their victory, just as Barret had said. There, while the whole town is rejoicing, a distant howl can be heard—the sound of Red XIII's old man, Seto, howling in pride for his son. Meanwhile, several celebrations—all with lots of people cheering and fireworks—take place in [all the towns].

After that, the group heads for Wutai. After Yuffie meets up with her pop, Aeris surprises her with great news: according to Iflana, it seems an undiscovered cavern, running beneath Wutai and connected to one of the caves at the Da Chao Statues, is full with tons and tons of materia—from which the Wutai can prosper. Overjoyed at that, Yuffie sweeps a surprised Aeris into a fierce hug and kisses her. At that, Cid quips, "Just don't let her steal any of Aeris' materia, you ol' *@#! girl."

After a second celebration, it's off to Nibleheim, where all of the Midgar survivors meet and greet the landing of the Highwind. Among the crowd is Barett's daughter, Marlene, and Aeris' foster mom, Elmyra, who moved into the empty house next to Tifa's. They're both overjoyed, while they greet Aeris and company with lots of hugs and kisses.

EMYRA: It's a miracle! When Cait Sith said you were murdered...

AERIS: Let's just say the reports of my death were greatly exaggerated.

From there, Barret, who is joyful at having been reunited with Marlene, proposes marriage to Elmyra, so that she may help him take care of Marlene—and to his joy, she agrees.

After the group heads its separate ways, Cid goes back to Rocket Town where, like in Finn's story, the former Shinra staff make a formation and salute. After that, Shera comes out to meet him, and to her surprise and delight, Cid, after some verbal stumbling, asks her to marry him—to which she consents.

Vincent, Yuffie, Red XIII and Cait Sith join together to convert the Shinra Mansion into a children's after-school youth center...

[There's more, but is it really necessary to go on?]

J.G. Mesa
Moreno Valley, CA

*Dear J.G.*

*I hope, for your father's sake, that the J stands for Jane or Janet. Because I cringe to think that a fellow male would write something so fruity. I'll bet you collect My Little Ponys, don't you? I will give you credit, though: you definitely have the best spelling and handle on grammar of any of our readers. For that alone, I shall refrain from continuing...*

**TOBAL 2 MELANCHOLY**

Dear Posty,

Where is *Tobal 2*? Are they ever going to release it in the States, or do they think Americans only like *Tekken*?

I'll get the import if I hafta, but I'd rather wait if it is indeed coming out, over here. What's the scoop?

Paul Rudish
Los Angeles, CA

*Dear Paul,*

*Better get the import, because at the time, SCEA felt that it was not worth the effort given the sales of the first* Tobal. *Apparently, they were saving up their money to throw at the marketing of garbage games like* Blasto. *This is why Sony balked at releasing the second. Once Square/EA were allowed to publish* Tobal 2 *themselves, they had already moved on to other game titles. It is one of the major tragedies of the PlayStation and an ominous sign for big-business decisions to come.*

**THE ENIGMA?**

I've been wearing this annoying space suit since yesterday. My skin grows musty and feels very itchy. By way of revenge, I didn't feed those dogs today. Now I feel better.

Unsigned
(although I read the return address and found out that it is Matt Hershberger from Mentor, OH)

*Dear Matt,*

*Get some original material, buddy. We all have read that line in RE2, too. I suspect, you'll now send us the following entries once a month in an attempt to be clever.*

**NOT MUCH FAITH IN THE COMPETITION**

Dear Posty,

Wassup? I've been reading your fine publication for about a year and a half now and I really have to say this: Thank You. You guys make the best mag there is, simply

put. I mean, look at how much color there is compared to say, [censored to protect the identity of this ultra magazine]. What about your dedication to using actual game logos and art? How about those really nice screen shots or reviews and editorial that hits the mark? Good Lord, you actually review imports! That's almost a sin if you ask other mags to do that! And lookee here, no PC reviews. Yay! (um... I don't actually have anything against PCs; I own one myself. I just want one mag dedicated to console gaming. There are already a bazillion PC mags out there!).

What's with all the other mags? They all say they love RPGs but somehow I get a different picture every time I read a magazine other than *GameFan*. I mean, all the other mags rant about *Tetris*, *Tomb Raider 2*, *Super Mario 64* and *MK4* being better than *FFVII*; then they wonder why more RPGs don't get released over here. I don't have any doubt as to what game was considered Best Game of 1997, by all of the Japanese mags, so what the hell is going on here? >sigh< At least you guys agree with me (hopefully)?

Chris Teski
Youngstown, OH

*Dear Chris,*

*Thanks for your support. While I don't necessarily agree with you 100%, I understand your bewilderment. Every month we page through the competition's reviews and are stunned by how off the mark they are. We even busted one that clearly didn't even play the game (gotta love the 'music' in N64* Duke Nukem*)! RPGs definitely don't get respect, even from many of the mags, but you must remember that many RPGs get major props.* Fallout *got great reviews;* FFVII *did get stellar grades. Personally, I think* FFVII *was a bit overrated. It was pretty, but nowhere near as groundbreaking as* Mario 64 *or* Tetris. *Sorry.*

*I'm sure you've already noticed that we have a new (albeit small) PC section. ECM has fought tooth and nail to keep it out, but coverage needs to be given to the monster PC games, like* Everquest *and* Unreal. *We promise not to bog you down with lame PC titles or take space away from console, though, so don't fret. GameFan is still about the console—and always will be.*

## QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS

Dear Postmeister,

I would like to ask you some questions:

1. I already own a Nintendo 64, but should I get a PlayStation too? I am having doubts about Nintendo 64.

2. I heard rumors that Lara Croft is a real woman. Is that true?

3. Why does PlayStation have *FFVII* and N64 doesn't? Nintendo had *FFII* and *FFIII*, but not *FFVII*. Why?

4. What do you think will happen to Sega in the near future?

I appreciate your time,
Sung Cho
Trenton, NJ

*Dear Sung,*

*Posty always has time for his disciples. I can see you are not a hard-core gamer, like some of my acolytes, so I will illuminate you. I can understand your doubts about the N64. Most of us do. But, this summer is going to be a renaissance time for the N64. With games like* Banjo, Forsaken, *and* All-Star Baseball *on the way, all will be well. Let's not forget* MK4, Zelda *or* Quest *either. I'd still buy a PlayStation, though, because it has a much bigger library with edgier games.*

*Is Lara real? I hope you aren't having boyhood fantasies of buxom babes running around the globe, searching for the lost Ark of the Covenant, 'cause that ain't reality. But, there is a flesh and blood person, whom the character is modeled after. And let me tell you, she's like a walking Russ Meyer movie, man, and that ain't no lie.*

*PlayStation has FFVII because Square, the developers of the game, signed an exclusive deal with Sony. You missed it, kiddo, but Nintendo and Square had a falling out awhile back (mainly over the big N's decision to use carts).*

*Have faith, little buckaroo, Sega will come around. Sure, their last three hardware ventures have been disastrous, but Katana (now called DreamCast) looks hot. Third party support is there and most of the idiots at Sega of America have been canned.*

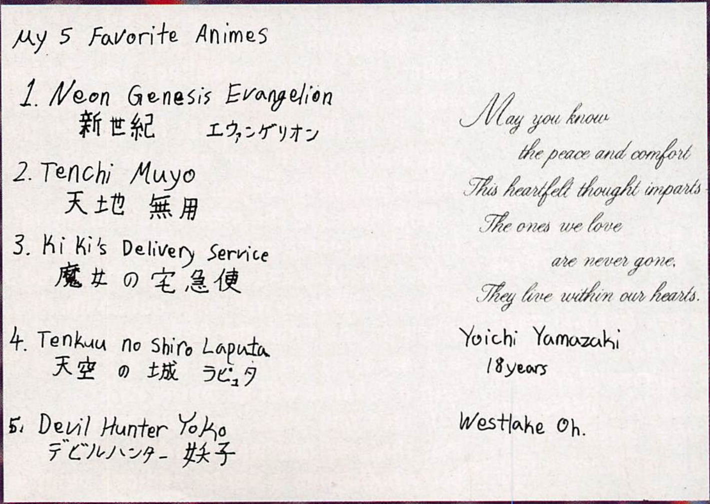
## A TRUE DIEHARD GAMEFAN

Dear Postmeister,

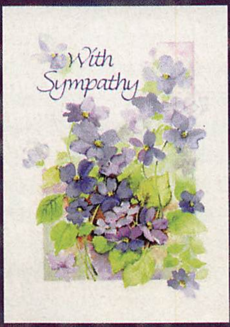
I've been a *Diehard GameFan* reader since Vol.1 Issue 5, when *Diehard* was still in the title of the mag. I've never felt compelled to pick up a pen and write you guys until now. The recent changes have concerned me, as there's been little or no explanation as to why they've occured. So I guess what I'm wondering is "What the hell happened?" Half the staff is gone, and who are these newbies? I don't trust them yet. I mean, I'd built up a close, personal bond with Hambleton and Nick Rox. Granted, Rox was insane. He was prone to exaggeration and overused superlatives, but DAMN! He was a layout god. Look at his *FFVII* design in Vol. 5 Issue 8. I've yet to see a layout in any mag, video game or otherwise, which compares with that. I'm a Journalism major at the University of Missouri, Columbia focusing on magazine design, and I would love to design a page like that. But all of a sudden, he's gone. Even worse, his head popped off! And all you can say is that, "He's dead." Where'd he go?

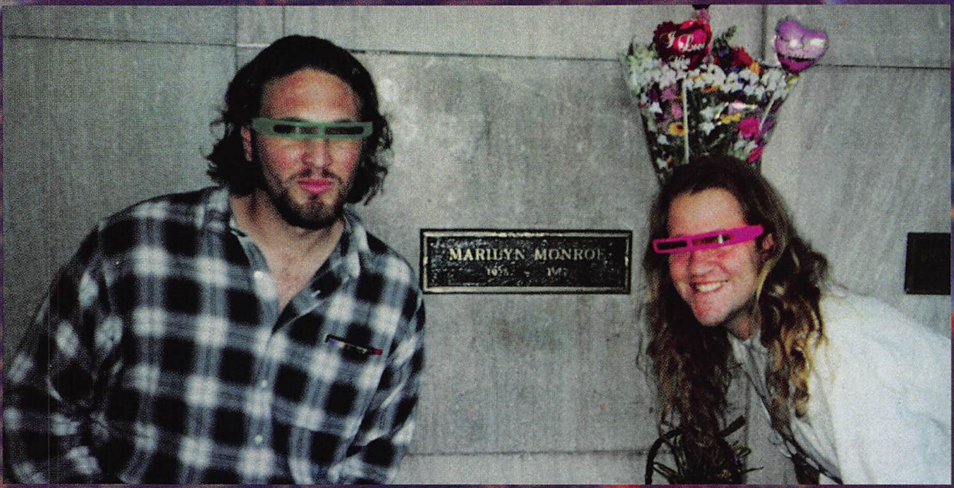
I can deal with the staff changes, as it's inevitable. I've dealt with them before (I still remember Skid, Takuhi, and Sgt. Gamer). Is it just me, or did *GF* skip a couple of months? I don't subscribe any more because I was tired of receiving my issues two months after seeing it at EB. I've bought every single issue since Vol. 1 Issue 5. I've watched *GameFan* grow considerably. To be honest, I laughed at the first issue I read. It was so rough around the edges and full of grammatical errors. It really lacked the polish of its competitors.

## A HALLMARK MOMENT




Here is a card from one of our fairer readers, Yoichi Yamazaki. She likes us... she really likes us!





Here are readers Dwayn and Steve. On a pilgrimage to Marylin Monroe's gravesite, these two diehard readers, from Grand Rapids, took a photo for us to see. Fruity?

really lacked the polish of its competitors. *GameFan* quickly became my favorite magazine because of its personality, high quality design, and exclusives. I sat through some pretty sad times, such as Team *GameFan*'s bewildering support of the Virtual Boy and Jag; neither of which deserved it. You guys were always able to bounce back and create a mag for the true enthusiast, like myself.

Now I'm worried. I just picked up the May 1998 mag, and while it's good I have some [more!?] issues with it. *GameFan* always was the first and most definitive source, but your latest issue features reviews of *Bloody Roar* and *Gex 2*, games that have been out for months. I'm probably too dependent on *GF*'s opinions, but I used to be able to read your reviews before I bought a game. I trust you guys 100x more than any other publication but recently, your coverage is behind the competition's. I already bought the U.S. version of *Tekken 3*, and all the latest issue has is one measly page with horribly pixelly photos. Though it promises *Tekken 3* will be "ripped apart" come next issue, who cares by then when everyone will already have had it for a month. Also, where's your coverage of games like *Dead or Alive* or *Soulreaver;* how about *Vampire Savior* for Saturn? Why am I reading about these games in other mags and not yours? I hope that this is simply a result of the tumult caused by the staff changes that will be rectified in the near future. A stellar E3 blowout would really be the Neosporin for my wounds.

Now, I'd like to comment on some of the changes recently implemented. It's good to see the Graveyard back, although *Project Overkill* and *Astal* don't seem that old to me. Though I've always liked AnimeFan, it's gotten way too big. I do think AF deserves a place in the mag, just not that big of a space. Same can be said for the Vault, which could have been condensed considerably. One final nitpick: one of the first things I learned in my news reporting class is that single subjects take single verbs. If I read things such as "Square are great" or "Sega are very moronic" one more time, I think I'll mount a clock tower and start picking off people. Whew, I've wanted to get that out of my system for quite some time. I realize this letter is way too long and too negative. I really do enjoy the mag, I just hope this recent lapse is only temporary. I'm quite confident you guys can pull things together and start ruling again. The sad thing is, you're still miles ahead of the competition, regardless. Lucky for you that you are so good that you could fall a little and still be pretty damn high...

Well, I look forward to seeing the next issue, although it'll be a while, as I'm headed to France for six weeks. How I'm going to live without my PlayStation for so long, je [ne] sais pas. By the way, I've got two years of college left, but soon I'll have a bachelors of Journalism with a French minor. Even better, I kind of look like a cartoon character, so you wouldn't even have to draw one of me. Perhaps I'll send a resume your way some day...

Take it easy,
Aaron Morales
Columbia, MO

*Dear Aaron,*

*Thanks for sticking with us and loving our magazine. We have seen some tumultuous times, but all is well now. You'll notice that our last couple of issues do have all of those things you felt you were missing out on. How about that* Soul Reaver *exclusive? As far as the staff members that have gone the way of the dodo, c'est la vie. It was tragic how Nick died, wasn't it? At least we managed to save E. Storm's life; even though his brain no longer works. The lateness of that issue and the demise of some of the GF staff are connected... but solved. The new members of our staff are the best in the biz, and they won't let you down. Especially that El Niño guy. You should see him eat! You have no idea how nervous I was getting, after I saw Nick and the others turn up dead. I kept expecting to wake up and find my own head on a chopping block!*

*I want to quickly address that singular noun thing you spoke of. Here in America, companies such as Square and Sega are viewed as singularities, but in England they are spoken of as a plurality. Anyway, as I'm sure you're aware, some of our recently departed staff (Chief Hambleton, The Guvnor, and Knightmare) are British (some more than others), and we felt it was better (in some cases) to let their personalities shine through, instead of being, y' know, some kind of evil corporate empire or something...*

*It is good to see that someone out there cares enough about GF to pay such attention to detail. We take your criticism as a compliment and hope that living in Missouri doesn't drive you to climb a clock tower and start sniping people. In parting, why on earth would you want to go to France?! I heard they eat snails there—swear to God!*

### THIS KID'S GOT A PLAN

Dear Wise Post-guru,

I'm an N64 owner who loves fighting games. I don't have a PlayStation but when *Tekken 3* came out, I went out and bought it with my hard-earned money. I did this in desperation because there are no kick-ass fighters on the N64. *Fighter's Destiny*, *Dark Rift*, and others are alright, but compared to the *Tekken* series, *SF* series (or any other Capcom fighter), they are just—alright. My personal opinion is that *Mortal Kombat* doesn't have the depth of *Tekken* or *SF*. So my plan now is to buy a PlayStation, when I get the dough. Then, I'm going to collect the *Tekken* series, just about every Capcom fighter and all of the other great fighters on the PlayStation. I'll get only the best four player and RPGs on the N64.

Now here are the main points of my letter. I have some questions and I need your help. I want to know is [whether] *Tekken 3* or future *Tekken*s will come out on the N64. When do you think the PS2 will come out? It'll be crazy for me to buy a PS now if future *Tekken*s will be on the PS2.

I have one other question (sorry!). To me, the only one who can save the N64's sorry butt (from a fighter-addict's point of

view) is Capcom. Do you know if Capcom will put any worthy fighters on the N64? Perhaps new games just for the N64? Anything?

Monkey Rash
Germantown, MD

*Dear Monkey Rash,*

*What on earth are you thinking calling yourself Monkey Rash? I almost caught that from a Swedish masseuse, once. Boy, that was one scary wait...*

*Bad news, Tonto, the future ain't lookin' too good for you. No Tekkens will be making appearances on the N64. Rumors have surfaced that Capcom will develop a fighter for the system, but that's just a rumor. As far as the status of the PlayStation 2 is concerned, don't hold your breath. The PSX still has some years ahead of it. Buying it is no more crazy than, say, buying a copy of Tekken 3 for a system you don't even own. I need to know something: What is a fighting fanatic doing buying an N64, anyway? I'd like to know what your definition of crazy is.*

## GAMEFAN: BAD TO THE BONE

You sirs, are evil to the core. Yes, I purchased your fine magazine just yesterday, to find, to my dismay, that you had killed off: The Enquirer, Nick Rox, Glitch, Substance D, and Knightmare!

You are insane beyond all domains of madness! There is no way to be any more crazy! You have alienated a lot of people with that move, you Ca-Niggets! And what about Chief Hambleton? Where is he?

Warezwolf ( DAVISMFG@advi.net )

*Dear Warezwolf,*

*It is not we that are evil, good son, but they. A dark cloud had settled over our squat bunker, in the outskirts of L.A. A cloud in the form of Mephistopheles, Lord of the Nether Region and Viceroy of All Things Not-So-Pleasant. A madness has creeped up their brain stems and corroded their minds, leaving them ranting lunatics with only one desire: to worship The Mullet. If you know what The Mullet is, then resist with all of your might. If not, thank all that is holy, every waking moment, and revel in the bliss that is ignorance.*

*Those that remain here, at GameFan, consider themselves Holy Knights, on a crusade to purge the world of The Mullet. It festers in the heart of the impure and manifests in the likes of the Enquirer. It almost took ECM, but when he stared into the eyes of the demon, for the first time, he was able to dispel the trance which it had cast over him, many years before. We honestly don't know what happened to Chief Hambleton. He saw The Mullet in its true form and battled it for his very soul. The struggle left him weak... and then he disappeared. We fear he may have succumbed to the beguiling ways of The Mullet, whose forked tongue spits forth only lies and deception. All I can say is thank the Lord that I am always in this cave, where even The Mullet fears to tread.*

*Besides, they're only cartoons (but don't tell Wolfie that) and cartoons can be redrawn. Life will go on... we will persevere.*

## BITTER OLD MAN

I don't see how you people can sleep at night, throughout Gamefan's history it has proven that that which it does not embellish, it makes up entirely. You are the weekly world news of game magazines!! Countless times I have believed reports and 'news' from your magazine in the past, only to later find out that it was totally false. I am of course speaking of many things, N64 being an SGI Indigo in a $200 package partially, but the Sega Dreamcast especially! Let us not forget the fact that your editors know NOTHING of how computer hardware works (*VF3* on NEC powerVR2 only getting 30 frames per second is ludicrous when all one has to do to increase frame rate is lower polygon count, that and the fact that even with your specs it could do twice as much as *VF3* arcade ever does at 60 FPS!!!).

And then there were your 'exclusive prototype photos' of the system that were published long ago, cleverly done, but obviously bogus from the get-go. You can tell they're computer renders that have been put on low quality newsprint and photocopied numerous times. That and the fact that it says 'DVD-ROM' on the lid, when DVD was NEVER chosen for Dreamcast by Sega's designers in the first place, due to the fact that they wanted the system to be AFFORDABLE, which DVD is FAR from being affordable in a mass market game machine!

The prosecution rests,
Crystal Walters,
Gamer
alaetrinsl@aol.com

*Dear Bitter Guy,*

*ECM has taken some time out of his busy schedule of monkey-ranching and writer-watching to address the contents of this letter. Take it away, ECM:*

*What I simply cannot grasp is letters like this. I mean, it's one thing when a person has a legitimate gripe or something that is worth bringing up, but in the examples cited, I have to take extreme issue.*

*Since you apparently weren't paying much attention to the hype-storm surrounding the release of the N64, Nintendo themselves stated numerous times, and in fact demo'ed the 'N64' on an SGI Indy workstation its then-remarkable specs. Nintendo started this rumor, not us.*

*As for the Sega Dreamcast info, well, I seem to recall the massive disclaimer surrounding that as we clearly stated that the pics we received were not to be taken as anything more than a curiousity. We didn't create them, and since we don't possess a doctoral degree in photo examination (as you so clearly do) we intentionally printed those shots with said disclaimer. Funny how you could tell those shots weren't real, but somehow missed the disclaimer.*

*Nothing of how computer hardware works?! This is where I think you've clearly stepped off the face of the earth. The base-level Power VR2 hardware cannot reproduce Model 3-caliber graphics. You then go on to state that reducing poly counts as a trade-off with frame rate would work, therefore nullifying your argument that Power VR 2 can easily replicate Model 3 (why would you ever need to reduce poly counts to up the frame rate if Power VR2 can easily do Model 3 games?). It's also clear you don't know very much about poly counts as those specs don't go into detail about effects-applicable poly counts—roughly meaning that it may be able to do countless flat-shaded polys, but only half a million with 'all effects' turned on.*

*But when it all comes down to it, one thing is quite clear in each and every one of your 'examples': They were all either reported with disclaimers or appeared in the 'Other Stuff' area of the magazine. If you've read GF for more than a month you'd know that anything that appears in Other Stuff is strictly based on rumors floating around the industry. Probably why we don't label it as GF-News or somesuch. You're probably too busy analyzing photographs or pursuing that advanced degree in semi-conductor design to notice that, though.*

*The defense rests...*

*(laughing all the way)...*

Write to me or I'll run for President!

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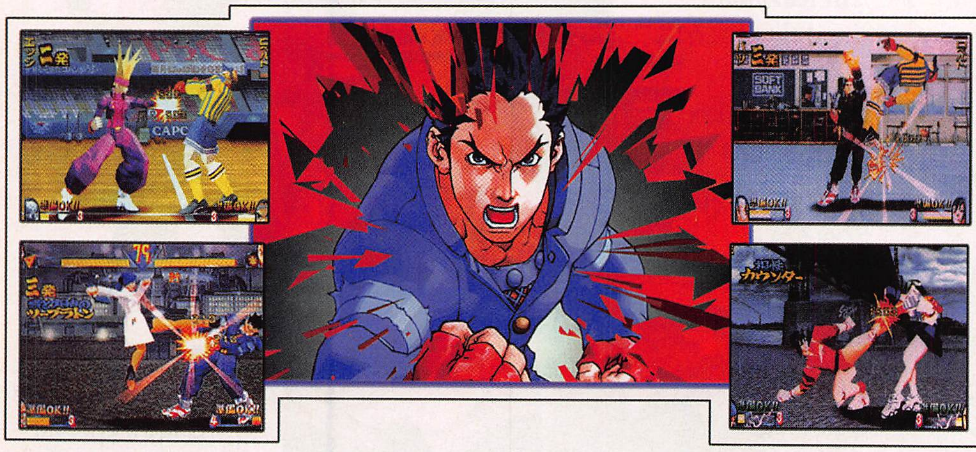
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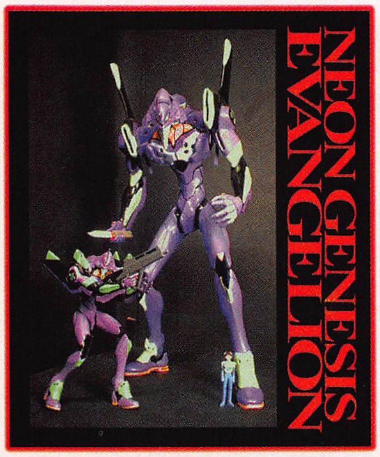

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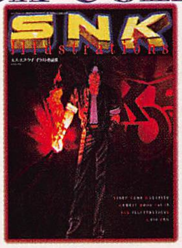
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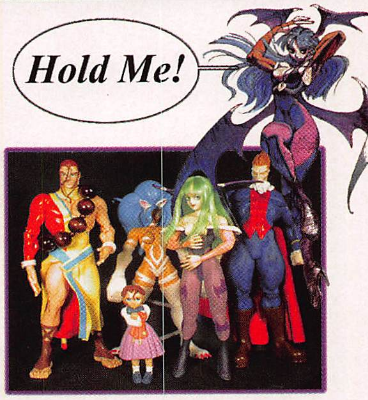

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